

Foreword by ALAN WATTS

THE KNEE OF LISTENING

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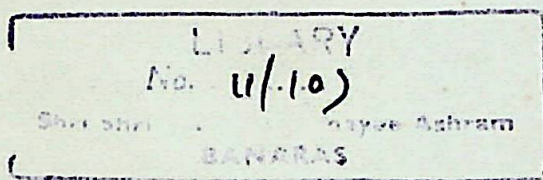
THE EARLY LIFE
AND RADICAL
SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS
OF

Franklin Jones

My peculiar *sadhana* was conducted by the Lord for the sake of future devotees. The transformations involved were effected by the Lord through several agents. First there were two *yogis*, one of the descending *sadhana* (Rudi), and one of the ascending *sadhana* (Swami Muktananda). These were the gross agents. Next were several *Yogis*, Saints, and Sages, each of whom was functioning as a *Siddha* (one who is complete, transparent to the Divine), agents of the *Maha-Siddha* (the Great *Siddha*, the Divine), and not living in gross form. First was Bhagavan Nityananda, a *Yogi-Siddha*. Then was Sai Baba of Shirdi, a Saint functioning as a *Siddha* in the mode of an object for devotees. Then was Sri Ramakrishna (the terminal events of my *sadhana* took place in a temple in which he is worshipped), a Saint functioning as a *Siddha* in the mode of an example to devotees. Lastly, there was Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, a Sage functioning as a *Siddha*. Also during this process the Lord himself appeared (in the form of a *Siddha* who miraculously manifested a small horse in a symbolic re-enactment of world-creation). And the Lord as *Shakti* also appeared (as the Virgin Mary, the Mother *Shakti*, and the Divine Consort). Also the Lord as *Maha-Siddha* appeared (the mystical manifestation of Jesus).

But always the Divine Lord or very God has been my *Guru*. The Lord is my *Guru*. I am the servant of the Lord. The Form of the Lord is manifested fully in me. I am the living agent of the *Maha-Siddha*, the living Lord, who is always already here, and who does not incarnate. He only sends agents, who, by virtue of perfect non-obstruction, manifest the *Maha-Siddha*, the Lord himself, perfectly. But they point to the Lord as Eternal God, *Guru*, and very Self. This is my work, and it is only now about to begin. I was born for this. The transforming work is complete.

Bubba Free John
(Franklin Jones)



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THE KNEE OF LISTENING



"The One who was to come is always already here."

THE KNEE OF LISTENING

by
Franklin Jones



THE
DAWN HORSE PRESS

• LOS ANGELES •

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by

Franklin Albert Jones

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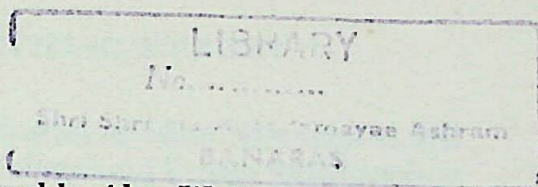
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THE COLLECTED WORKS OF C. G. JUNG, edited by G. Adler, M. Fordham, and H. Read, translated by R. F. C. Hull, Bollingen Series XX, volume 8, **The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche** (copyright (c) 1960 by Bollingen Foundation), reprinted by permission of Princeton University Press: pages 506–508.

Portions of Sri Ramana Gita and Self-Realization reprinted by permission of Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, South India.



Foreword by Alan Watts.

Although I do not know Franklin Jones personally, what he says, and says very well, is something that I have been trying to express for thirty-five years, but which most people seem quite reluctant to understand—as if it were too good to be true. The point, with which Krishnamurti and the ancient Chinese Zen masters also agree, is that there is no progressive method by which the liberated and awakened state (*moksha*) can be attained. This state of being and consciousness has innumerable names—mystical experience, enlightenment, self-realization, cosmic consciousness, union with God, not to mention Sanskrit, Chinese, and Arabic equivalents—but none of them are satisfactory because it is altogether beyond words. Striving after this state blocks the understanding that it is already present, as does also a kind of purposive not-striving.

There are, for example, those who try to live completely in the present, the Eternal Now, by attempting to be fully concentrated on what is at this moment—as in the Theravada Buddhist *satipatthana* discipline or Gurdjieff's "self remembering." I am not quarrelling with this. Franklin Jones also tried many methods. But all along it should have been obvious that all consciousness, all experience, is of nothing else than the eternal present. Memories of the past and anticipations of the future exist only now, and thus to *try* to

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live completely in the present is to strive for what is already the case. This should be clear to anyone. The same principle applies to striving for nirvana or union with God by means of so-called spiritual exercises. There is no actual necessity for a road or obstacle course to that which IS.

But there are two main reasons for the persistent attachment to spiritual methods. The first is that, being ignorant of what we have and are now, we look for it in the future, and therefore can be beguiled by all those gurus who pick our pockets and sell us our own wallets. They promise marvellous states of consciousness, ecstasies, psychic powers, and transportation to other levels of being. So what? If you were managing the entire universe—which in one sense you are—it would be absolutely necessary for it to appear that a lot of things were out of control. Does the ventriloquist want to dine every night with only his dummy?

The second is the beguilement of spiritual pride, which is also the same thing as a sense of guilt. "I am not worthy to attain this exalted state unless I have suffered, unless the teacher has beaten me, unless I have sat in a cold, dark cave for three years, or practiced *za-zen* with my legs aching for hours." Anyone silly enough to think this way deserves all the pains he must endure. Nothing is more ostentatious than deliberate humility, nor more egocentric than projects to get rid of egotism. These are strong words, but not uttered in a spirit of condemnation, for those who undertake such projects may, by so

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doing, realize very clearly that they are futile. But then they may return as gurus thinking that this is the only way to realize the futility of spiritual ambition, and then "lay their trip" upon others without asking themselves, "Is this trip really necessary?"

As I read Franklin Jones—especially the Epilogue, which is worth the price of the book—he has simply realized that he himself as he is, like a star, like a dolphin, like an iris, is a perfect and authentic manifestation of the eternal energy of the universe, and thus is no longer disposed to be in conflict with himself. Dangerous wisdom—and yet fire, electricity, and technical knowledge are also dangerous. But if you genuinely *know* this, it is nothing to be proud of nor humble about. It is just what is so, and there is absolutely no necessity to parade it by defying social conventions, on the one hand, or by coming on as one who is extremely holy, on the other. The hapless Rasputin was, perhaps, an example of the first case, and Meher Baba of the second—though he had a jolly face and a lively twinkle in the eye.

It should be understood that none of this is to say that one should *not* practice yoga or any other type of meditation. I myself use some of these disciplines, not to attain anything in terms of spiritual rank, but simply to enjoy them, as if I were playing a musical instrument or preparing a Chinese dinner.

Now to say what Franklin Jones is trying to say is like drawing an asymptotic curve—a curve

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which is always getting nearer and nearer to a straight line, but only touches it at infinity. Perhaps it could be said that his curve is approaching it a little faster than some others, knowing, however, that there is no hurry. Beyond words, in the silencing of thought, we are already there.

Rancho Saucelito, California.

ALAN WATTS.

April 1973.

*Prologue:**THE HEART OF UNDERSTANDING*

Death is utterly acceptable to consciousness and life. There has been endless time of numberless deaths, but neither consciousness nor life has ceased to arise. The felt quantity and cycle to death has not modified the fragility of flowers, even the flowers within our human body. Therefore, our understanding of consciousness and life must be turned to that utter, inclusive quality, that clarity and wisdom, that power and untouchable gracefulness this evidence suggests. We must cease to live in our superficial and divided way, seeking and demanding only consciousness and life in the present form we grasp, avoiding and resisting what appears to be the end of consciousness and life in death.

The Heart is that understanding, that true consciousness, that true life that is under the extreme conditions of life and death. Therefore, it is said, that One that is neither born nor come to death, not alive as the limitation of form, not rendered in what appears, and yet it is the living One, than which there is no other, appearing as all of this, but eternally the same.

There is only the constant knowledge and enjoyment of the Heart, moment to moment, through the instant of all conditions of appearance and disappearance. Of this I am perfectly certain. I am That.



Part One:

THE LIFE OF UNDERSTANDING

I

On November 3, 1939, at 11:21 a.m., in Jamaica, New York, I was born Franklin Albert Jones.

The sign of my birth is Scorpio, marked by the images of Spirit and of Sex, the eagle and the crab.* It is the sign of internal warfare, the problem and perfection. I have played in the dilemma of my natural alternatives, but from my earliest experience of life I have enjoyed a condition that I would call the "bright."

As a baby I remember crawling around inquisitively with an incredible sense of joy, light and freedom in the middle of my head that was bathed in energies moving freely down from above, up, around and down through my body and my heart. It was an expanding sphere of joy from the heart. And I was a radiant form, a source of energy, bliss and light. I was the power of Reality, a direct enjoyment and communication. I was the Heart, who lightens the mind and all things. I was the same as everyone and everything, except it became clear that others were unaware of the thing itself.

Even as a little child I recognized it and knew it, and it was really not a matter of anything else. That awareness, that conscious enjoyment and space centered in the midst of the heart is the

*The eagle and the crab are symbols for the extremes, high and low, to which individuals born under the sign of Scorpio are said to be inclined.

"bright." And it is the entire source of humor. It is reality. It is not separate from anything.

Very early in life I conceived a purpose in the "bright." It was to restore humor. Throughout my life I have been moved to find and communicate the fundamental source of humor to others. It appeared in many forms, as enjoyment, laughter, faith, knowledge. But at last it has only one form, which is reality itself.

Thus, my life has been an adventure of the knowledge and unfoldment of the "bright," which I have known to be the form of reality. And what is that exactly? This book is determined to communicate it again and again in many ways. But on the level of my earliest recognition of it, it was my simple state. It was consciousness itself, prior to any experience, but it was not distinct from my life. It was not mysterious or awesome. There was no shadow, nothing hidden in it. It was not motivated. It knew no beyond. It had no sense of time. Nor had it yet begun to feel any kind of confusion or identity with existence as personality and experience. It was an operating center, without dilemma or unconsciousness. It knew no divisions in itself. Many energies were communicated within it. There was joy in the body, its light cell life, its respiration and circulation of force and pleasure. There was a current of energy in the heart that rose into the head through the throat. And there was an energy below the heart that rose up into it from below. There was a surrounding energy that was spaceless but which had a locus above the head. And all of

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these energies were a single current of light and life in the heart that was reflected as enjoyment in the head. That form of consciousness was bright, silent, spaceless, full, knowing only and entirely this thing itself, and seeing no problem, no separation in the fact of life.

But my first twenty years were the gradual undermining of this certain existence by all the ordinary and traditional means of life.

II

In 1957, I began to do undergraduate work in philosophy at Columbia College. My only purpose in being there was to understand what we are. What is consciousness? What must occur within it for it to be what it is even while it already bears the certainty of death? Whatever academic studies were required of me, I was always at work on this one thing.

After several months of trying to understand what I was reading, I decided that I would begin an experimental life along the same lines which controlled the mood of our civilization. I decided that I would unreservedly exploit every possibility for experience. I would avail myself of every possible human experience, so that nothing possible to mankind, high or low, would be unknown to me.

I knew that no other possibility was open to me but that of exhaustive experience. There appeared to be no single experience or authority among us that was simply true. And I thought,

"If God exists, He will not cease to exist by any action of my own, but, if I devote myself to all possible experience, He will indeed find some way, in some one or a complex of my experiences, or my openness itself, to reveal Himself to me." Thereafter, I devoted myself utterly and entirely to every possible kind of exploit.

No experience posed a barrier to me. There were no taboos, no extremes to be prevented. There was no depth of madness and no limit of suffering that my philosophy could prevent, for, if it did, I would be liable to miss the lesson of reality. Thus, I extended myself even beyond my own fear. And my pleasures also became extreme, so there was a constant machine of ecstasy. I could tolerate no mediocrity, no medium experience. I was satisfied with neither atheism nor belief. Both seemed to me only ideas, possible reactions to a more fundamental if unconscious fact. I sought reality, to be reality, what is, not what is asserted in the face of what is.

I went on in this fashion for more than two years, until the whole violence of my seeking precipitated an experience late one night in the middle of my junior year.

I had rented a small room several blocks away from the college campus. When I was not in class, I spent most of my time in that room reading, thinking and writing.

On this extraordinary night I sat at my desk until it was very late. I had exhausted my seeking, so that it seemed there were no more books to read, nor any possible kind of experience that

could radically exceed what I had already embraced. There seemed no outstanding sources for any new excursion, no remaining and conclusive possibilities. I was drawn into the interior tension of my mind that held all of that seeking, every impulse and alternative, every motive in the form of my desiring. I contemplated it as a whole dramatic force, and it seemed to move me into a profound shape of energy, so that every vital center in my body and mind appeared like a long funnel of contracted planes that led on to an infinitely regressed and invisible image. I observed this deep sensation of conflict and endlessly multiplied contradictions, so that I seemed to surrender to its very shape, as if to experience it perfectly and to be it.

Then, quite suddenly, in a moment, I experienced a total revolution of energy and awareness in myself. An absolute sense of understanding opened and arose at the extreme end of all this consciousness. And all of the energy of thought that moved down into that depth appeared to reverse its direction at some unfathomable point. The rising impulse caused me to stand, and I felt a surge of force draw up out of my depths and expand, filling my whole body and every level of my consciousness with wave on wave of the most beautiful and joyous energy.

I felt absolutely mad, but the madness was not of a desperate kind. There was no seeking and no dilemma within it, no question, no unfulfilled motive, not a single object or presence outside myself.

I couldn't contain the energy in my small room. I ran out of the building and through the streets. I thought, if I could only find someone to talk to, to communicate this thing. The energy in my body was overwhelming, and there was an ecstasy in every cell that was almost intolerable in its pressure, light and force. But it was the middle of the night. There were no lights coming from the rooms. I could think of no one to awaken who would understand my experience. I felt that, even if I were to meet a friend, I would be unable to express myself, but my words would only be a kind of uncontrolled poetry of babbling.

My head had begun to ache with the intense energy that saturated my brain. I thought, if I could only find someone with some aspirin or something to tranquilize me. But there was no one. And at last I wore myself out wandering in the streets, so that I returned to my room.

It would take me many years to understand that revolution in my being. It marked the rising in me of fundamental and unqualified life, and it removed every shadow of dilemma and ignorance from the mind, on every level, and all its effects in the body. But I would have to pass through many years of trial before that understanding could become the stable constant and premise of my being.

Even so, in the days and weeks that followed I grasped certain basic concepts that arose in me at that time and which stood out in the mind undeniably, with a self-validating force. Two things in particular stood out as fundamentals.

I had spent years devoted to forceful seeking for some revolutionary truth, some image, object, reason or idea whose effect would be absolutely liberating and salvatory. My seeking had been motivated by the loss of the "bright," the loss of faith, religion and the reasons for joy. But in that great moment of awakening I knew the truth was not a matter of seeking. There were no "reasons" for joy and freedom. It was not a matter of a truth, an object, a concept, a belief, a motivation, or any external fact. Indeed, it was clear that all such objects are grasped in a state that is already seeking and which has already lost the prior sense of an absolutely unqualified reality. Instead, I saw that the truth or reality was a matter of the removal of all contradictions, of every trace of conflict, opposition, division or desperate motivation within. Where there is no seeking, no contradiction, there is only the unqualified knowledge and power that is reality. This was the first aspect of that sudden knowledge.

In this state beyond all contradiction I also saw that freedom and joy is not attained, that it is not dependent on any form, object, idea, progress or experience. I saw that we are, at any moment, always and already free. I knew that I was not lacking anything I needed yet to find, nor had I ever been without such a thing. The problem was the seeking itself, which created and enforced contradiction, conflict and absence within. Then the idea arose that I am always already free. This was the second aspect of that fundamental awareness.

III

The following year, 1961, after I finished my work at Columbia, I began graduate study in English at Stanford University, in California.

Since my awakening in college, I had developed an internal process of a kind of listening. I would focus on the plane of the mind and allow it to be the focal point of experiences within and without. I thoroughly believed that the individual human being was involved in and controlled by a profound, largely unconscious or preconscious logic or structure, a motivating drama or myth. I felt that this myth, prior to becoming conscious, acted only as an arbitrary limitation, and it never appeared directly in the mind or in our works and actions. This "myth" was perhaps common to us all collectively, but it was effective on the level of the individual, and it needed to become conscious in each of us before any creative work or freedom was possible on its basis or beyond it.

I combined the internal work of listening with the activity of writing. It was my intention to remain actively attentive to the movement of my life on every level, to an exhaustive degree. Thus, I would become exhaustively aware, by a critical and constant act of attention, of whatever experience or movement occurred on the plane of life and consciousness. I would simply perceive every form of memory or internal imagery, every form of thought or perception, every indication

or pattern in my daily experience, every intention, every imposition from without, in fact every possible kind of experience.

I hoped by these means to become directly aware of the form which governed or informed the entire quality and adventure of my existence. And this form or myth, the myth of my life, would, I was certain, become the source and subject for some kind of radical or useful literature.

My purpose at the time was similar to the one that guided me in college. But whereas before I pursued experience itself, and a certain objective truth, internal or external, now, as a result of my revelation in college, I sought the removal of internal contradictions or the mutual alternatives that enforce kinds of experience, the patterns of seeking and of conflict.

During the period in which I worked in this way I pursued every kind of means, every method of interiorization and exteriorization of awareness that could possibly dredge up the lost content, the controlling myth, the forms of God, reality, soul, truth, key memory, etc., all of the false and presently unconscious logic or imagery that prevented the "bright" of simple, direct and unqualifiedly free awareness. To this end, the new or ancient hallucinogenic drugs seemed profoundly useful and promising.

In the fall of 1962, after the completion of the necessary year of formal study for the master's degree at Stanford, I volunteered to be the subject for certain drug experiments at the Veterans

Administration Hospital in Mountain View, California. During a six-week period I was given mescaline, LSD, and then psilocibin, at three separate sessions. During a fourth session I was given an undescribed combination of these.

The drugs induced many different experiences, most of which were not particularly important to me. However, there were at least two experiences that appeared significant.

During one of the sessions, I think perhaps while I was on LSD, I felt a profound emotion rising in me. It seemed to begin at the base of my spine, and when it appeared in the heart it generated an intense emotion that was overwhelmingly loving and full and yet intensely sorrowful. It rose from the heart through the throat, up the back of the head, and culminated in what appeared to be a massive dome in the crown of the skull. At that point I began to weep uncontrollably, as if all of the parts of my being had been aroused spontaneously, and I was born, suddenly conscious and alive. In the midst of this experience I had a thought that seemed to be the verbal equivalent and symbol for the whole event: "Getting to cry is shaped like a seahorse."

I had become conscious of the formal structure of our living being, analogous to the nervous system, but, even more than that, what is called in Indian and occult literature the "chakra-body" or the awakened "Kundalini Shakti." It was the latent "serpent" of energy that is usually turned outward to the various physical organs

and centers of our vital experience. But here it was opened in itself, and consciousness was turned to its own internal form. The "seahorse" is that shape, with its various vital or ethereal attachments, which moves upward from the base of the spine through the massive centers of the heart and the head. The result in me of this profound awakening was an uncontrollable emotion, even the sorrow of conscious birth.

In later years I happened to see some photographs taken inside the womb at various stages in the development of a human fetus. At an early stage the body is mostly unformed, and its central axis, analogous to the full spine, is curved. The heart appears visibly as its vital center. It is massive, full of blood, and it stands out from the body as a separate orb attached to the spinal tube by a cord. The head is also quite large. Its full weight and size are generated in the crown and forehead, and the facial features, like the limbs, remain undeveloped. I think that in the event I have described I was not only experiencing the fully conscious body of our most prior living form, the heart of all real and spiritual consciousness, but I was also re-experiencing my own prenatal state. I was re-experiencing my birth as a living being in the womb, and thus the awakening was not only profound but also quite shocking and sorrowful.

It was this very "form," this ordinary and spiritual body, which I knew as a child and recognized as the "bright." And it was also this "chakra" body that I would later investigate in

detail in the practice of Kundalini Shakti yoga here and in India.

One other experience stands out from that period. Several times, during seizures of childhood illness, when I would pass into delirium, I had an experience that appeared like a mass of gigantic thumbs coming down from above and pressing into some form of myself that was much larger than my physical body. This experience of the "thumbs" also recurred once or twice during these drug trials.

The "thumbs" were not visible in the ordinary sense. I did not see them then or even as a child. They were not visible to me with my eyes, nor did I hallucinate them pictorially. Yet, I very consciously experienced and felt them as having a peculiar form and mobility, as I likewise experienced my own otherwise invisible and greater form.

I did not at that time or at any time in my childhood fully allow this intervention of the "thumbs" to take place. I held it off in fear of being overwhelmed, for I did not understand at all what was taking place. However, in later years this same experience occurred naturally during meditation. Because my meditation had been allowed to progress gradually, and the communications at each level were thus perceived without shock, I was able at those times to allow the experience to take place. When I did, the "thumbs" completely entered my form. They appeared like tongues or parts of a force coming from above. And when they had entered deep into

my body the magnetic or energetic balances of my being appeared to reverse. On several occasions I felt as if the body had risen above the ground somewhat, and this is perhaps the basis for certain evidence in mystical literature of the phenomenon of suspension, transport, and even ascension.

At any rate, during those stages in meditation the body ceased to be polarized toward the ground or the gravitational direction of the earth's center. There was a strong reversal of polarity communicated along a line of force analogous to the spine. The physical body, as well as the form of energy that could be interiorly felt as analogous to but detached from the physical body, seemed to turn in a curve along the spine and forward in the direction of the heart. When this reversal of force was allowed to take place completely, I seemed to reside in a totally different body, which also contained the physical body. It was spherical in shape. And the sensation of dwelling as that form was completely peaceful. The physical body was entirely relaxed and polarized to the shape of this other spherical body. The mind became quieted, and then there appeared to be a movement in consciousness that would go even deeper, into a higher conscious state beyond physical and mental awareness. This spherical form was the subtle "astral" or "desire" body, the link between the mind and the vital-physical life.

These remarks are already leading toward experiences that belong to a later and mature phase of my life. I mention these experiences

here because they demonstrate a continuity in my conscious experience that links the prenatal and early childhood stages with my later life. These events also show that there was a pattern in reality being communicated to me even during that period of drug experimentation and "artificial" inducement. I regard that period no differently than any other in my life. It contained degrees of wisdom and many indications of the same matters of living form that I have perceived at other, more natural phases in my career. It is only that, like any other stage in my life, it came to the end of its serviceable value, and at that point I abandoned it.

IV

After my experiences at the VA Hospital I went into a period of relative seclusion. Now I was living with Nina, who has since become my wife. She worked as a school teacher during this period and supported our living.

In those days my method of writing was deliberately unproductive. My intention was not to write a particular narrative I had preconceived. Rather, I deliberately and very intensively focused in the mind itself. And, as a result of several years of experiment in this direction, I remained focused there without effort, almost continuously, regardless of my peculiar external involvement.

This could perhaps be understood as a kind of "yoga" of my own creation, and it has analogies in the history of spiritual experience. But I

had no separate goal in doing this. There was no other point I hoped to arrive at as a result of this concentration. I wanted to reside in the plane of consciousness at its deepest level, where all experiences, internal as well as external, were monitored. I wanted simply to become aware of what passed there.

Ordinarily we do not remain aware on the deepest level of the mind. We are either concentrated in its extensions, at the level of sense awareness or in the processes of concrete thought. Occasionally we slip into a deeper level, similar to the one to which we pass in dreams, and there we experience the daydreams, the subliminal memories, emotions and motivations that underlie our waking life. It was my purpose to remain continuously aware at this deepest focal point of the mind. That was also the point at which I was often concentrated in the "bright." It is a point deep within the head, but it monitors all the levels of consciousness, the physical body and the experiences of the sense organs, the vital centers in the lower body, the great center of being and energy in the heart, the peculiar order of subliminal imagery that moves out of that creative center analogous to the throat, and all of the passing perceptions, the images, ideas, sensations, forms, memories and super-conscious communications that are generated in the parts of the head.

In those days I spent all of my time concentrated in this witnessing function. I carried a clipboard with me wherever I went. And I would write whatever perceptions were generated in con-

sciousness. I attempted to make this writing exhaustive, so that not a single thought, image or experience would pass unrecognized. The act of writing seemed necessary to the act of becoming conscious itself. What I did not write seemed to pass away again into unconsciousness, perhaps to remain trapped there and provide matter for the hidden, unconscious form that bounded my awareness and prevented the "bright."

Whenever I was too busily occupied to write, I would invent a catch phrase or some other mnemonic device in order to hold the concept or perception until I could write it fully. I became so occupied in this process that Nina would have to do anything that required practical attention. She would drive the car, communicate with friends, and perform all of the usual chores within and without the household. My writing became a continuous, fascinating and absorbing occupation. And I began to fall naturally into a thread of consciousness and life that was profound, hidden, unfolding, inevitable and sublime.

As a result, I became intensely aware of every movement in consciousness. I perceived every event in the world as well with an almost painful absorption. Every creature or environment I perceived became a matter of profound attention. I would write long pages of exhaustive observation on every step of a walk on the beach, or the day-long process and change of the ocean. There was page after page describing the objects and marks in the sand as I walked; detailed descriptions of rooms, mental environments, etc., so that I gradually came to a

similar state in which I found myself at the point of awakening in college. I came to a point of exhaustion, not of tiredness, but of intensely inclusive awareness, where there appeared very little that remained to be perceived outside the form of consciousness itself.

As I approached that point of inclusive awareness the form of my writing also began to bear fruit. My concentration, as I said, was not purposive. It was not in order to create something intentionally on the basis of what was preconceived in the mind. But I was always looking and listening for that structure in consciousness itself which is chronically prior to ordinary awareness. I was waiting on the revelation of the hidden content of the mind. Not some sort of primitive event, no memory in the Freudian style or some secondary symbolic perception which informs the content of Jungian types of introspection. These came and went. But I was attentive to the structure of consciousness itself, to the seed-logic or myth that prevented the "bright."

Eventually, I began to recognize a structure in consciousness. It became more and more apparent, and its nature and effects revealed themselves as fundamental and inclusive of all the states and contents in life and mind. My own "myth," the control of all patterns, the source of identity and all seeking began to stand out in the mind as a living being.

This "myth," this controlling logic or force that formed my very consciousness revealed itself as the concept and actual life of Narcissus. I saw

that my entire adventure, the whole desperate cycle of awareness and its decrease, of truly conscious being and its gradual covering in the whole mechanics of living, seeking, dying and suffering, was produced out of the image or mentality that appears hidden in the ancient myth of Narcissus.

The more I contemplated him the more profoundly I understood him. I witnessed in awe the primitive control that this self-concept and logic performed in all of my behavior and experience. I began to see that same logic operative in all other men and every living thing, even the very life of the cells and the energies that surround every living entity or process. It was the logic or process of separation itself, of enclosure and immunity. It manifested as fear and identity, memory and experience. It informed every function of being, every event. It created every mystery. It was the structure of every imbecile link in the history of our suffering.

He is the ancient one visible in the Greek "myth," who was the universally adored child of the gods, who rejected the loved-one and every form of love and relationship, who was finally condemned to the contemplation of his own image, until he suffered the fact of eternal separation and died in infinite solitude. As I became more and more conscious of this guiding myth or logic in the very roots of my being, my writing began to take on an apparently intentional form. What was before only an arbitrary string of memories, images and perceptions leading toward an under-

lying logic now appeared to proceed from the heart of that logic itself, so that my perceptions and my thoughts from hour to hour began to develop as a narrative, completely beyond any intention or plan of my external mind.

I found that when I merely observed the content of my experience or my mind from hour to hour, day to day, I began to recognize a "story" being performed as my own conscious life. This was a remarkable observation, and obviously not a common one. The quality of the entire unfolding has the touch of madness in it. But we are mad. The ordinary state of our existence, although it is usually kept intact and relatively calmed by the politics of human society, is founded in the madness of a prior logic, a schism in reality that promotes the whole suffering adventure of our lives in endless and cosmic obstacles.

In order to learn this thing I had to endure the progress of my own "madness." I had to witness the madman himself and undermine him with my knowledge. This "madness," however, is not merely unfortunate, irrational and disruptive. It is required of all those who would pass into real existence beyond fear and ignorance. And, in the process, we experience remarkable forces and eventually witness the synergy of the mind and every movement of energy in the world.

It was this synergy or synchronicity, this conscious coincidence of the internal and external world that I witnessed at that time. After the pattern I recognized as Narcissus began to show its flower in the mind and I became set-

tled in witnessing its creative position in the whole of my life, the internal and external events in my experience began to demonstrate a common source or, rather, a coincident pattern. My own thoughts or images, then, began to arise in a similar pattern to my external experiences. A narrative was being constructed as my very life, which was itself a mythic form. The people, the passing events, the dramatization of my own motives, and all the imagery and categories of my thought appeared to be generating a conceived pattern. And I knew that my own life was moving toward the very death of Narcissus.

I was not utterly afraid even of the death of Narcissus, which was now my own death. I knew that no matter how terrible the event in terms of physical and conscious suffering, it was not in fact the death of anything identical to my own real being. Even my own physical death appeared to me as a kind of mythic event. Its apparent consequences would perhaps be the end of my worldly life, but I was certain that I would have to pass through it in order to transcend the form of Narcissus. I knew then that all our suffering and all our deaths are endured only in the concepts, the functions and mentality that are guided by the unconscious logic of Narcissus. And so I devoted myself freely to the self-meditation of Narcissus in order to die his death as quickly as possible.

That "death" did occur very dramatically two years later. But necessary transformations in my state of life had to occur before it would

be possible. This point in my narrative brings us to the spring of 1964.

V

One morning in May of the same year, I awoke with the memory of what appeared to be a significant dream. I had dreamed that I was being born. At first I saw it from outside my own body. I was watching my mother from a position near the doctor's viewpoint, between her legs. I could not see her face, and so I am not certain it was my natural mother in the dream. Her body was very large, fecund and swollen. The baby appeared head first, and its face was red, ugly, wet and bunched up like a fist. Then it appeared that I took the position of the baby itself, and one of the doctors said: "It's one of those multiple babies!"

Then I became aware of what must have been a later period in the life of that entity. The point of view was from my own body. I assumed it was the mature body of the baby I had seen being born. There were cords of phlegm that rose up out of my insides through my throat and out into the room. I was uncomfortable with this gag in my throat, but I was calm, as if I had lived that way for some time. The mass of phlegm separated out into two paths in the room, and each was attached to a young man. I assumed from their appearance that the three of us were in our late teens. And I also assumed that the birth of the "multiple"

baby was the birth of the three of us. The first baby, whose face was like a fist, and whose body I now inhabited, was the source or controlling entity. The other two were dual aspects of my being.

The one boy was very bright, energetic, attractive and youthful. The other was "dark." His energy was heavier, and he had less mobility, physical and mental. I noticed the cords of phlegm at my feet as I moved forward and carelessly stepped on them. The act of stepping on the cords was both voluntary and involuntary, so that I felt both aggressive and guilty or trapped. I thought perhaps the boys would die if I stepped on the cords and broke them, but I also desired to be free of the gag in my throat and the immobility our attachment required of me. But when the cords were crushed and broken under my right foot the boys came running up to me and embraced me happily. We all appeared now bright and free. And they thanked me for cutting the cords, which they said they had long hoped I would do.

An external observer of this dream could certify one of several interpretations, depending upon the partial viewpoint by which he understands the matters of consciousness. I think probably all the basic interpretations would bear some of the truth. But I required no interpreter. The very having of the dream seemed to mark a transformation in me. I had operated for several years in the aggravated model of my conscious being, and this dream appeared to mark the end of a long period

of difficult progress. Those years had been filled with awesome fear and doubt as well as great intensity and, for me, worthwhile endeavor. Now a feeling of wholeness and well-being rose in the center of me, and I felt a peculiar relief in the wake of this dream. This change in me apparently set the stage for a remarkable discovery.

A few days later I arose in the early morning feeling very energetic. I sat at my desk to read while Nina slept. I turned to a volume of essays by C. G. Jung which I had often examined before. In particular, I turned to some chapters from *The Interpretation of Nature and the Psyche*. When I came to the concluding chapter I read something which, though I must have seen it before, never communicated to me as it was about to do.

I think it would be valuable to quote the entire passage as I read it at that time:

It may be worth our while to examine more closely, from this point of view, certain experiences which seem to indicate the existence of psychic processes in what are commonly held to be unconscious states. Here I am thinking chiefly of the remarkable observations made during deep syncope resulting from acute brain injuries. Contrary to all expectation, a severe head injury is not always followed by a corresponding loss of consciousness. To the observer, the wounded man seems apathetic, "in a trance," and not conscious of anything. Subjectively, however, consciousness is by no means extinguished. Sensory communication with the outside world is in a large measure restricted, but is not always completely cut off, although the noise of battle, for instance, may suddenly give way to a "solemn" silence. In this state there is sometimes a very distinct

and impressive feeling or hallucination of levitation, the wounded man seeming to rise into the air in the same position he was in at the moment he was wounded. If he was wounded standing up, he rises in a standing position, if lying down, he rises in a lying position, if sitting, he rises in a sitting position. Occasionally his surroundings seem to rise with him — for instance the whole bunker in which he finds himself at the moment. The height of the levitation may be anything from eighteen inches to several yards. All feeling of weight is lost. In a few cases the wounded think they are making swimming movements with their arms. If there is any perception of their surroundings at all, it seems to be mostly imaginary, i.e., composed of memory images. During levitation the mood is predominantly euphoric. "Buoyant, solemn, heavenly, serene, relaxed, blissful, expectant, exciting are the words used to describe it There are various kinds of 'ascension experiences.'"^{*} Jantz and Beringer rightly point out that the wounded can be roused from their syncope by remarkably small stimuli, for instance if they are addressed by name or touched, whereas the most terrific bombardment has no effect.

Much the same thing can be observed in deep comas resulting from other causes. I would like to give an example from my own medical experience: A woman patient, whose reliability and truthfulness I have no reason to doubt, told me that her first birth was very difficult. After thirty hours of fruitless labor the doctor considered that a forceps delivery was indicated. This was carried out under light narcosis. She was badly torn and suffered great loss of blood. When the doctor, her mother, and her husband had gone, and everything was cleared up, the nurse wanted to eat, and the patient saw her turn round at the door and ask, "Do you want anything before I go to supper?" She tried to answer, but couldn't. She had the feeling that she was sinking through the bed into a bottomless void. She saw the nurse hurry to the bedside and seize her hand

* Hubert Jantz and Kurt Beringer, "Das Syndrom des Schwebenerlebnisses unmittelbar nach Kopfverletzungen," *DER NERVENARZT* (Berlin) XVII (1944).

in order to take her pulse. From the way she moved her fingers to and fro the patient thought it must be almost imperceptible. Yet she herself felt quite all right, and was slightly amused at the nurse's alarm. She was not in the least frightened. That was the last she could remember for a long time. The next thing she was aware of was that, without feeling her body and its position, she was *looking down* from a point in the ceiling and could see everything going on in the room below her: she saw herself lying in the bed, deadly pale, with closed eyes. Beside her stood the nurse. The doctor paced up and down the room excitedly, and it seemed to her that he had lost his head and didn't know what to do. Her relatives crowded to the door. Her mother and her husband came in and looked at her with frightened faces. She told herself it was too stupid of them to think she was going to die, for she would certainly come round again. All this time she knew that behind her was a glorious, park-like landscape shining in the brightest colors, and in particular an emerald green meadow with short grass, which sloped gently upwards beyond a wrought iron gate leading into the park. It was spring, and little gay flowers such as she had never seen before were scattered about in the grass. The whole demesne sparkled in the sunlight, and all the colors were of an indescribable splendor. The sloping meadow was flanked on both sides by dark green trees. It gave her the impression of a clearing in the forest, never yet trodden by the foot of man. "I knew that this was the entrance to another world, and that if I turned round to gaze at the picture directly, I should feel tempted to go in at the gate, and thus step out of life." She did not actually *see* this landscape, as her back was turned to it, but she *knew* it was there. She felt there was nothing to stop her from entering in through the gate. She only knew that she would turn back to her body and would not die. That was why she found the agitation of the doctor and the distress of her relatives stupid and out of place.

The next thing that happened was that she awoke from her coma and saw the nurse bending over her in bed. She was told that she had been unconscious for about half an

hour. The next day, some fifteen hours later, when she felt a little stronger, she made a remark to the nurse about the incompetent and "hysterical" behavior of the doctor during her coma. The nurse energetically denied this criticism in the belief that the patient had been completely unconscious at the time and could therefore have known nothing of the scene. Only when she described in full detail what had happened during the coma was the nurse obliged to admit that the patient had perceived the events exactly as they happened in reality.¹

I have no idea how long I spent reading and re-reading this passage and the surrounding material from Jung's essay. But when Nina awoke to prepare to go to work I was a changed man. I cannot overestimate the importance that data held for me at the time. I felt this was a key to a whole range of experience, now capable of honest and direct investigation, which would vindicate, parallel and extend the experiences that had long been the burden of my life. All in all, this passage from Jung signified in me a liberation from mortal philosophy and all bondage to the form of death.

In the weeks that followed I took to reading whatever material I could find that dealt with occult phenomena, miracles, spiritual and religious philosophy and any kind of liberated significance. And, within myself, I grew more accustomed to operating in the manner that my own work had precipitated. The recognition of the coincidence between consciousness and external experience had begun to develop into a comfortable ability, so that

¹ C. G. Jung, *PSYCHE AND SYMBOL* (New York, 1958), pp. 287-289.

I began to use the images that seemed arbitrarily to pass through the mind. I saw that many of these images were signs of precognition.

One image became a constant factor. I saw that I was to find a teacher that would be able to help me. I didn't see him, but I saw pictures in flashes of a store where oriental sculpture and artwork were sold. It became clear to me that this store was in New York. I told Nina about this experience, and we began immediately to prepare to leave for New York. These events led on toward the middle or end of June, 1964.

VI

In the weeks that preceded the event of my meeting with my first teacher I had informed myself with every kind of study. I had passed from the remarkable news that life was expanded beyond mortal phenomena. It was no longer a matter of proving such things to be true. I was certain enough of them on the basis of experience and reliable communication, so that I did not pursue phenomena themselves. I had increased my knowledge of such things to include a new viewpoint, a more inclusive philosophy along the lines proposed by mystical and spiritual literature. My reading encompassed the literate works of Christian saints and the classical writings of Buddhism and Zen Buddhism, Hinduism, Vedanta and Yoga. I was acquainted with the works of Ramana Maharshi, Krishnamurti, Sri Rama-

krishna, and Sri Aurobindo. I felt particularly drawn to these more oriental teachers, whose path was liberation and fulfillment of a dramatic and miraculous kind, free of the dogmatic and ritualistic limitations of symbolic and traditional religion. I felt that the importance of Christ was not his image and the motivations of his following, but the very nature of his freedom and power as a fundamental gift of all beings.

I was attendant mainly to the yogic paths and to the truth proposed alike in Vedanta and Buddhism. But the ways of discrimination and practice proposed by Vedanta and Buddhism, even Zen Buddhism, seemed to me unavailable or artificial. They seemed to require a path apart from the constant and usual action. But the one truth of the Self, the nondual Reality, the unqualified Divine that included all things, seemed to me the highest expression of my own experience, whether in the "bright" of my childhood or in the peculiar revelations of my youth in college and in California.

Thus, I was moved to seek a teacher, a guide who could lead me into the full consciousness of this primary truth, with all its capabilities and joy. And such a teacher would rightly, it seemed to me then, be adept in the yogic processes and in the functions of higher consciousness that seemed to me the practical way of enjoying what was symbolically represented in the cool Scriptures of Vedanta and Buddhism.

Curiously enough, my reading then as always had seemed to be dictated by the laws of my

own necessity. What is given me to read is always appropriate and immediately consequential to the manner of my present development. Thus, as the day of my meeting with my teacher approached, I began to read works that dealt with the peculiar yoga of the "Kundalini Shakti." I read such works as *The Serpent Power* by Sir John Woodroffe, and I found in them keys to many of my own experiences. The descriptions of the various "chakras" or spiritual and creative centers in the body, and the details of experiences generated in each stage of spiritual ascent, brought a clarity of order to the progress of many of my own seemingly arbitrary states.

I saw that what I called the "bright" was a fundamental spiritual consciousness in which the whole "chakra body" was awake and open to the intuitive faculties of energy and light. And my experience in college appeared as a sudden awakening of the Shakti, the basic and conscious energy that manifests and leads back to the highest source of consciousness, the Self, or Siva, that is eternally calm.

I knew that my own path of life and the meaning of all life was in this process of Siva-Shakti, the endless unfolding and return of consciousness, energy and experience, and its consistent foundation in the pure infinity of unqualified, transcendent being. Thus, I began to expect a teacher who would lead me further into a more conscious, natural and regulated revelation of this same process.

I was only uncertain of the precise direction

of such seeking. The fundamental spiritual path as it is proposed in the various literatures seemed to divide at a certain point. The typical motive of the Oriental teachings was in the direction of an absolute liberation from all forms of experience and life-consciousness. Such teaching is typical of Vedanta and Buddhism, in the classical works of Zen masters and such modern saints or Avatars as Ramakrishna and Ramana Maharshi.

On the other hand, the teachings of Christianity, of Western occultism, and of such Eastern saints as Sri Aurobindo indicated a path whose goal was in life or at least not radically opposed to life. They drew on the ultimate perception of all the Scriptures, which variously state that this is "God's plan and creation," "this is That," "Nirvana and samsara are the same," "there is only one, without a second." They propose a sacrificial existence of surrender and reception wherein life is moved toward a perfect vision or evolution. I found even in the mind of the iconoclast, Krishna-murti, a sense of life that is not divorced from the process of natural existence. And, although I greatly desired the incomparable peace of highest knowledge, I tended to sympathize with this latter path of realization and creativity, whose purposes are a Divine Life rather than a pure separation into absoluteness.

This problem of direction, which has always been one of the most fundamental in my progress, was motivated in me as I sought for my teacher. And it was to form the basis for my first real questions when I met him.

When we arrived in New York I began to search for this teacher with peculiar certainty. I didn't so much seek for him by effort as watch and listen for him according to certain signs that I had learned. The vision was clear to me that I would find him in an oriental art store. So Nina and I went about the practical matters of founding a household and a living, while I watched for him. Then, in early September, I found the store I had seen in visions, and I went to meet my teacher.

I walked into the store as directly and upright as I could. A large man was sitting in a chair by the desk at the rear of the store. His mother was standing behind him in a small doorway making a sandwich.

The man stood up and approached me. He seemed to make it a point to shake my hand. He introduced himself as Rudi, and I told him I was Franklin Jones.

I was already very uncomfortable, and now I felt foolish, but I was determined. "What do you teach?" "Kundalini Yoga." "Are you an adept at this yoga?" He looked at me very sternly and a little bothered. "You don't teach it if you can't do it."

I told him I was looking for a teacher and felt that I had been directed to him. He asked me what I did. I said that I wrote and had just moved from California. "No, what do you do spiritually?" "Oh, well, I relax and direct myself toward the top of the head." He smiled a little. "Do you work?" "No, I have just been writing,

and I live with my girl friend. She works." He drew away from me a little. "This yoga requires great discipline and surrender, and I can't teach anybody who doesn't accept the discipline and work. You go out and get a job and come back in about six months or a year. We'll talk about it then."

That was apparently the end of the interview! He made it a point to shake my hand again, and he turned away, so that I felt I was supposed to leave.

As I left the store I felt a tremendous relief that I had been able to manage the meeting at all. I was disappointed, to be sure. There was no sublime love-meeting, no miracles, no immediate recognition of me as the long-awaited disciple. But I had been received, at least conditionally. Six months or a year was not an unbearable length of time. Unpleasant as the prospect was, I was willing to get a job if that was the kind of test required of me. I felt a kind of certainty in the man himself. He was by his own admission adept in the teaching and practice of the highest and most miraculous kind of yoga. I had met him, and I was certain that I was willing to meet the conditions.

Strong and complicated feelings went through my mind as I moved up the block beyond the store. By the time I reached the corner I had gained my composure, and even my doubts had turned to elation and certainty. Then I became aware of a very strange sensation. A current of very strong energy was rising up my arm from

my right hand, the hand Rudi had made it so much a point to shake when I arrived and as I left.

As I became aware of this energy, it quickly passed into the rest of my body and filled me with a profound and thrilling fullness. My heart seemed to strain in a vibrant joy, and my head felt swollen, as if my mind were contained in an aura that extended around my skull several inches. As I walked, I began to run. I felt on fire with a joyous energy, and I had become incredibly light!

In the evening I also began to wonder about these things. My writing and my way of life were very real to me. They were even the necessary preliminary to spiritual effort. I began to think about the writings of Sri Aurobindo, and how he justified creative work, even writing and other forms of art, as a usable and even necessary means for spiritual opening. And even if I did get a job, should I continue to write? And what about all of my other habits? What does this teacher think about drugs, and sex? Should I leave Nina? Do I have to become a vegetarian?

The whole matter was much more complicated than it had originally seemed. So I sat down to write Rudi a long letter about all of my questions. I intended to have Nina deliver it to him the next day and return to me with his answers. "The young girl who brings this letter to you is my girl friend. We are not married, but we have been living together for two or three years." Etc., Etc. I wanted to be certain I made as complete a transformation in myself as necessary,

so that when I returned to him I should be fully able to use his teaching. I asked about creative work and drugs, sex and diet. I told him about the experience of his energy. And I made it clear that I was willing to undergo all the conditions.

The next day Nina went to see Rudi after work. She returned very amused with me. Rudi had received her very warmly, in contrast to his brusque and almost rude reception of me. Nina hadn't asked him to teach her. He told her that I had a lot of work to do, but he would be glad to take her as a student right away! Anyway, he appreciated my letter, and I should come and see him the next day.

When I went to Rudi the following day his manner was much more familiar and friendly. He told me that he really loved Nina and that she was a very open person who could easily receive the Shakti, or the "Force," as he called it.

On the other hand, he certainly did mean that I would have to begin to work on myself before he would allow me to come to his classes. "What about my writing?" "How much do you write or want to write? A serious writer works constantly, out of great need." "Well I write but more or less spontaneously. It is a different thing. Well, yes, I am not disciplined. A job wouldn't interfere with that work."

His one answer to all of my questions was "work." Discipline and effort are necessary to provide an instrument that can contain this "Force." It isn't necessary to give up sex or life

or go on any special diet. Only work, be intelligent with these things, take proper care of yourself.

As the weeks passed and I became an accustomed regular at the store, I found that I would be given some work to do when I arrived. There was always some sculpture to be moved around, some windows to wash. Gradually it became clear that only casual visitors or friends got to sit and talk. Any student that came was given work to do.

This "dharma" of work awakened tremendous resistance in me and most of Rudi's other students. But that was also the teaching. We would often wish it were otherwise, and we always suckered ourselves into a casual visit, hoping he would be in the mood to let us sit and be entertained with stories of miracles and all of the glory we were going to gain in the future by the aid of the "Force." The more we suffered, the more we communicated our resistance and discomfort, the more he would tell us to surrender. He said that we should "be like smoke." You can cut through smoke with a knife, but it is not disturbed.

The idea that was infused in us was the simple attitude of work. Work forced us to encounter resistance and obstacles in ourselves, and perseverance in work gradually wore away resistance and created a state of openness or surrender. The constant practice of work and surrender opened the instrument of the body and the internal mechanism that was a channel for the

“Force”; the spiritual energy or Shakti that was Rudi’s gift, and the continuation of work strengthened the instrument in its openness and allowed the “Force” to expand and create ever higher realizations and capacities. He often said that work was endless and always created more work, so that life was pictured as a fruitful effort in constant relation to the “Force” that had no other goal than continual growth.

Two or three weeks after Nina began to go to “class,” Rudi gave me permission to begin also. The work I had managed to acquire was not completely satisfactory from his point of view, but it was a “job,” and I had managed to adapt myself to the basic conditions for his teaching. I paid more attention to discipline and cleanliness. And, in general, I had turned the self-involved habits of solitude into a more communicative and socialized life.

I decided to begin classes on my birthday, thinking this was auspicious. Rudi’s classes always followed the same pattern. We would begin to arrive in the classroom about 7:30 in the evening. Someone would light incense next to Rudi’s chair, which was a large metal trunk covered with a bearskin. His seat was placed on a higher level of the room, about three or four steps above the rest of us. Most of us sat in folding chairs set in rows, with an aisle down the middle. Some would sit in yogic postures on the floor in front of him, but my legs did not grow accustomed to such sitting for a year or two.

Before my first class, I was told to go to the

store for instruction. Rudi told me that the "Force" was the real subject of the class. It came into contact with us through his eyes. I was simply to sit comfortably and relax and try to open myself or surrender to the Force. If I felt the Force enter me, I should simply relax more and allow it to go down through the chest and belly into the sex organs. When it got there I should relax at the base of the spine and let it travel upwards to the head. If I wanted, I could silently say "So" with each inhalation and "Ham" with each exhalation. "So-Ham" meant "I am That," or "I am the Force, or God," whichever concept was meaningful to me. But the important thing was surrender and opening to the Force, so that it could carry the exercise. Sometimes, as he spoke of these things in class, he would also recommend that we feel a part of ourselves going way out into space, beyond all the universes.

By the time class was to begin everyone was supposed to be seated and quiet and "into the exercise." The Force was not only supposed to be given by Rudi, in or out of class, but was always working in us. Therefore, surrender and work was to be our constant attitude, and class was merely a special exercise of the same work. In addition to class we were to spend up to an hour a day at home doing the same exercise. But we should not spend more than an hour a day at meditation. Such only creates illusions. It was a creative exercise, to awaken capability, not to produce effects like quietness. Apart from the exercise, we should only work and live intelligently.

Rudi spoke briefly on this first night, and I believe he introduced me to the group either at the beginning or the end of the exercise. Then he sat up straight in the lotus posture and closed his eyes. All of us also made an effort to relax and surrender. Then he opened his eyes. They appeared to be deep set and very wide. His eyes moved from person to person in the room. He concentrated on each one for a minute or two, or perhaps only a few seconds, depending on the needs of the person.

I could feel a certain relaxation as I tried to surrender, open and empty my mind. And I waited intensely for Rudi to look at me. When my turn finally came I felt a little foolish. Looking deep into a person's eyes, particularly under such circumstances, requires a certain relaxation from the usual armor we wear. But, gradually, I loosened up, and accepted my position of vulnerability. I tried to deepen my surrender as he described. I concentrated on his eyes. We remained that way for perhaps a minute, and then he passed on to another. I continued to try and deepen the surrender while concentrating on his form. He would often tell us not to close our eyes unless there was a very strong impulse from the Force to do so. Then, suddenly, the class was over. As was customary, we lined up to leave, and each received a big bear-hug from Rudi. He told me that it was a very good class for me. The Force would begin to work for me very soon.

Apart from a certain relaxation during the

class and an exhilaration afterwards, which I usually felt after a meeting with Rudi, I had not experienced anything unusual. This was somewhat disappointing to me. I realized that this work was not going to be simply a matter of free miracles and visions but a gradual process requiring great effort.

As the weeks passed, I became more accustomed to this exercise, and going to class became a matter of course. The work of surrender became more natural to me, and I began to become sensitive to levels of resistance programmed into my being. At times they seemed to fall away, as if by the work of the Force, just as at other times they could only be removed by the active effort or surrender. But there were many times when I felt unable so much as to touch the resistance in myself. Indeed, the more I tried to surrender, the more the resistance grew.

This is a common experience among those who deliberately perform various kinds of work in consciousness. The more you try to do it, the more obstacles arise. There is probably no more confounding and frustrating admonition than the simple order to relax. And one of the greatest lessons I would learn from all my years of spiritual effort was how spiritual seeking not only reinforces or makes more conscious the very things it seeks to remove, but it is for that very reason founded in the same mechanisms and motives that are our problems and suffering. I would come to resolve these dilemmas on the basis of a radically different understanding, but for

now I disciplined myself to conscious effort with tremendous force and need.

Rudi would often talk about the kind of effort to surrender that he felt was required. He compared it to "tearing your guts out." I found that my life was becoming a terrible ordeal of surrender, and the depth of my work never satisfied him. He worked on me by frustrating me and minimizing my efforts or accomplishments, so that most of the time I was in a positive fever. I felt the incredible weight of all I needed to surrender. Real spiritual work must amount to nothing less than a wholesale cutting away of all that I am. It must amount to an infinite depth, an absolute surrender. And when I would examine the littleness of my depth, I would become awed and frustrated. I was burdened with the need for an impossible purification and self-abnegation.

This surrender was not merely a physical opening or relaxation of the nervous system. Nor was it simply a purifying and disciplining of life. It was a profound internal opening in every part. Rudi sometimes said we should concentrate on surrendering three things: self-pity, negativity, and self-imagery. Surrender was a perfect letting go of the ego, the learned identity and drama.

As my experience grew I also became critically aware of the work, its effects, its value, and its sources. I acquired these things in my own intelligence, and thus I gradually became aware of differences between Rudi and myself.

I never quarreled with the appropriateness of Rudi's philosophy and practice for his own case.

It was only that I gradually began to understand that his emphasis on effort, work and surrender was a distinct characteristic of his peculiar need and experience. My own tendencies at that time were indeed destructive, and his teaching was almost entirely beneficial to me while I remained with him. But, for myself, such a machine of effort, once it had achieved its earliest benefits in my general well-being, began only to reveal its own impossibility, so that I was drawn to another understanding.

Rudi's way was obviously not entirely or even basically founded in Indian yoga. Indeed, I was to discover years later that his methods and aims were quite different from those of Swami Muktananda, his Guru. Even before he went to India and met his present teachers, he had first been a student of the Gurdjieff work in New York. And he had graduated from there to the practices instituted by Pak Subuh in the Subud movement here and abroad.

Rudi never spoke much in detail about his experiences in those movements, but the manner of his teaching, his philosophy and practice, can be seen as a direct reflection of the leading motives of Gurdjieff and Pak Subuh.

The Gurdjieff work emphasizes the necessity for profound effort, the absolute and conscious work of evolution. Like Rudi, it doesn't emphasize such work for the sake of "enlightenment" or some single, perfect and liberating perception that is the ultimate goal of striving. It posits the endlessness of that work in the direction of an ever

higher evolution of abilities, knowledge and perception that will have direct consequences in human life.

Rudi's way of work and effort in an endless progress of growth was generated by his own needs in the presence of his peculiar tendencies. But it is clear that he acquired much of the technology and reinforcement for that path in the Gurdjieff movement. Even so, the Gurdjieff work was basically a pattern of philosophy and technique. He acquired the first evidence of what he called the "Force" from Pak Subuh.

Pak Subuh is an Indonesian teacher who experienced a spontaneous awakening sometime early in his life. It was the awakening of a certain power or spiritual force that came to him miraculously and thereafter remained always available to him. He found that he could also initiate this force in others, if they were even a little open to it. Rudi apparently experienced his first conscious initiation in the "Force" while involved in the Subud movement, and later he received it from Pak Subuh himself.

But Pak Subuh was not aware that there was any previous tradition of this same power. He thought it was an entirely new spiritual influence that he was to communicate to the world. He knew nothing of the tradition of Kundalini Shakti in India, nor the already traditional process of initiation by touch, thought, look, or the giving of a mantra (a potent sound or word) known in India as "Shaktipat."

Therefore, Pak Subuh interpreted this Force and its value along lines peculiar to his own experience. He saw that once this Force was activated in a person it could be developed into various purifying and creative life abilities through a spontaneous exercise he called the "latihan." Again, this energy was not promoted as a means to an absolute higher knowledge, which is its radical purpose in the Indian sources. It was interpreted as a kind of creative God-Force whose significance was in the evolution and expansion of creative life processes.

Thus, the work of Subud also has the kind of endlessness and non-specific purpose characteristic of Rudi's teaching. However, in my own case, spiritual life always had a radically specific purpose. It was to realize the highest knowledge, the knowledge of fundamental reality that makes all the difference and ends the search. For this reason, I was also chronically disturbed by the notion of perpetual, evolutionary work which Rudi advocated. And, again, this difference in our tendencies or aims also helped to generate the break between us in later years.

Rudi apparently possessed the fundamentals of his path, both its philosophy and its activating "Force," even before he arrived in India in the late fifties. What he received from Swami Muktananda was that Force in its most direct and powerful form. And he had received it even earlier from Swami Nityananda, Muktananda's Guru. He saw his Indian teachers as an endless source, a fountain that he could always tap and

thereby discover even greater depth, greater experiences, and greater power.

In spite of his apparent dependence on these sources, Rudi always demanded recognition of himself as a unique source or instrument, which precluded an equal realization or receptive power in any of his students. Thus, in time he seemed to present an obstacle to the thing itself. At least he appeared this way to me. The stronger I became, the more I demanded a direct and overwhelming contact. And Rudi's tendency to command an exclusive and limiting right for himself became a source of conflict between us, although I never outwardly manifested that conflict until the day I left him.

It was not mere growth that I desired. Nor could I be satisfied with an "occupied" existence, happily subject to the mastery of another. I sought an utterly radical reversal and transformation of existence. And it was only a matter of time before the burden of effort and Rudi's philosophy would reach their limit in me. When they did, I was moved to continue my adventure elsewhere. But this in no way denies the inherent validity and value of Rudi or his work.

As a result of my long experiment, I had discovered an underlying content and creative logic or image in my own consciousness. I had located the source of suffering and misadventure in myself and recognized it as the pattern and drama of Narcissus. The logic of separation and self-fascination had appeared to me concretely as the leading mechanisms of ordinary consciousness.

This was coupled with another recognition, based on my own experience, but which I also found in the observations of Jung and the literature of spiritual phenomena. It was that the drama and fate of Narcissus was not necessary, not equal to reality. Thus, I sought an encounter with reality that would release me from Narcissus, my own deadly logic, by forcing me to include what Narcissus always rejects by subtle self-involvement.

The idea of release from Narcissus, the internal myth that creates our suffering and destroys the inherent bliss and freedom of uncontradicted reality, was my leading intention. As long as I felt that Rudi manifested and dramatized that "other" presence that is reality, that always works to confound Narcissus, I gave myself up to him as a man does to God.

All in all, our lives became cleaner and happier. It was an intense struggle and discipline for me, but I welcomed all its effects. These practical changes in our way of life were the essential and lasting benefits of our experience with Rudi. Even these were gradual, and it would take longer for the kind of internal experiences I sought to begin with any kind of dramatic potency.

On a physical level my life was becoming happier. My new logic of living was a conscious surrender of the patterns of self-indulgence and excess to which I had voluntarily submitted in the past. I began to limit and improve my diet, and this, coupled with the heavy labor of work as a furniture refinisher, gradually strengthened me and dropped my weight from more than

230 pounds to about 170 pounds. I began to use Hatha Yoga exercises to limber my body and adjust my weak back. I abandoned drugs. I abandoned my writing. Nina and I were married. And I returned to school to do graduate work in theology. All of this enabled me to enjoy a natural state of comfort and well-being I had never known before.

VII

No description of this period would be adequate and true without the inclusion of my various experiences with the "Force." At first that experience was limited to the kind I first described in meeting with Rudi. I became aware that an actual force emanated from him. I could feel it in various ways as a magnetic or electronic energy in my body. This of course is a tremendously unique experience in terms of what people ordinarily would suppose to be reality. But it was for me not unusual or unique in my experience. Rudi's manifestation and use of it was unique, and my approach to it was now based on a totally new logic of life, but I had experienced such things throughout my life, as the "bright" of childhood and the rising force that overtook me in the college experience.

Very quickly, I came to a comfortable recognition of this force as a constant presence, and felt it operating as a continuous source in Rudi. Thus, that force was redeemed from de-

pendence on the fluctuations of my own consciousness. It stood outside me, constantly available through my teacher. I was free to turn myself from the long enterprise and experiment of my youth, wherein I had sought to perceive and verify the actual existence and nature of this force in myself. Now I devoted myself to purifying work under the assumption of a concrete relationship to that actual presence.

Thus, my first experiences were as I have described. They manifested as changes in my life pattern, my physical, mental and moral existence, its instruments, and its environment. But after I had eliminated the practices and forms of deliberate self-indulgence that inhibited the work of this force on an internal and conscious level, I began also to have experiences of a "spiritual" nature.

As I continued to go to Rudi's class and tried to open and surrender, I began to experience Rudi's "Force" entering me as he said it would. When he would begin the exercise or look at me during the exercise I would usually feel a sudden descent of tremendous and seemingly infinite force from above. I could feel this descent as a peculiar kind of pressure that first came in the head and then permeated the body.

This pressure was the usual sign of the working of that force in me. As I exercised myself in surrender to it over time, I could feel certain points of resistance in myself fall away and give place in a kind of interior opening on a mental and physical level. In time I could feel this pressure at

will and almost constantly. It became a presence that I could respond to in moments of repose or even during any kind of activity.

After many months this pressure became particularly apparent in the head. The center of the upper brain became irritated in a manner that had a deep and even sensuous quality. My ears began to feel as if there was an internal pressure opening their channels, and they felt a certain heat. At times I could almost hear the force descend in a subtle way, and my ears seemed to be stretching open to perceive some sound, both internal and external, that was always going on.

The process of meditation involved a surrendering of thought, and as this emptying of the mind continued it was replaced by a strong concentration of penetrating energy in the head. Afterwards the head would feel bathed and warmed in a blissful energy that seemed to be descending from above. Its immediate effect was to offset the usual concentration of energy in thought and in the lower body. For a period sometimes lasting for hours after the exercise there was only a sublime calmness and fullness without any anxiety or any movement of desire. The energies that flowed in the body appeared to be balanced and harmonized. And this appeared to be the natural precondition for clarity and free-functioning as a human entity.

There were also certain visual sensations. When I would concentrate in the exercise, either on Rudi or an image used for meditation at home, the field of ordinary vision would become dark and

thick, then suddenly expand as a pervasive field of force, and I would perceive energy in the atmosphere. A certain brightness would surround everything and form the very substance of space. It was this peculiar quality that led me to call my childhood experience the "bright."

At times during meditation I would also see certain forms appear superimposed on Rudi's face as well as on other people or objects. I would see beards and moustaches appear and disappear on Rudi, or he would seem to be clothed in Oriental robes. Sometimes the whole room would take on a quality of splendor, and it would seem as if we were in another time, seated before some philosopher-prince. The features of his face would go through many changes, as if revealing his past lives and our past associations.

Rudi and some of his students also claimed to have various visions, but I never had any such experiences while with him. Basically, my experience with him was limited to these subtle demonstrations of energy on a physical level, or a level of energy just beyond the physical.

One time Nina and I spent a weekend with Rudi at a beach house on Fire Island. That night Nina woke up feeling a tremendous electronic shock running through her body, beginning from the head. I experienced the same thing a few nights later. In my own case, I struggled to arouse my body and shake off the experience. The Force had become so powerful that I felt I was about to be electrocuted.

There was also another manifestation evident

in Rudi and some of his students. During the exercise their bodies would begin to jerk in a characteristic manner. There appeared to be a jolting within the spine that communicated to the muscles. Their spines would seem to revolve and make small spasms. Then their heads would begin to revolve very violently. This always happened to Rudi at the close of the exercise. I often desired this experience myself, but it didn't occur for sometime. You should know that I never at any time tried to fake or simulate any kind of phenomenon. My own seeking has always been too desperate to be satisfied with anything but an obvious and spontaneous experience. Thus, I mention only experiences that have been genuine in me, and which carried a certain internal knowledge and self-verification.

These movements or "kriyas" (spontaneous and purifying movements), as they are called in India, did not arise at all in me until shortly before I left Rudi and his classes. Finally, they did begin to develop, although not as violently as in others. For the most part, I only felt a kind of gentle pulsing in my lower back, like little bubbles of air and fluid rising in a percolator. Also, I began to manifest a twitching in my face and mouth, a rapid breathing like the snarl of a wolf, and a peculiar contraction like the yawn and growl of a lion. The arising of such manifestations and the spontaneous generation of animal sounds is also characteristic of this Shakti yoga.

On a few occasions I also experienced what I described previously as the "thumbs." While

seated in the exercise I would feel the Force descending through me almost unobstructed. Then it seemed that I could easily relax to an unusual depth. And the energy would seem then to move to the base of the spine and travel upwards along the spine to the head. As it did so I felt as if the polarity of my being were reversed, and, instead of tending gravitationally downward toward my seat, I would gravitate upwards toward the head. As I relaxed, the reversal of energy would be completed, and my form seemed to be a kind of detached sphere, entirely free of the ordinary body sense. A tremendous sense of peace and fullness would arise at such times, and I would long to remain in that state. But as soon as I became attached to it, it would tend to disappear. So I would relax more. And as I relaxed a depth in consciousness would arise, and I would feel as if I were falling into an infinite deep. Then I passed away into a profound bliss. In India this is called "samadhi."

These experiences approximately summarize my benefits from Rudi.

VIII

In the late summer of 1966, Nina and I moved to Philadelphia, where I spent a year of study at a Lutheran seminary. I did not consider myself a Christian in any ordinary sense, but I agreed to take on study for the Christian ministry because it was compatible with the interests that

had guided me since childhood. And, even more, it would be a source of disciplined "work." If the Christian community appeared flexible enough to adapt to a person of my peculiar experience, so much the better. Then I would also have the possibility of a career.

Then, in the spring of 1967, I passed through an experience that epitomized all of my seeking and all of my discovery. The experience itself is surrounded with all the evidence of a clinical breakdown. But it is also full of the sense of primary experience, the breakthrough of an ultimate and unqualified consciousness. It was the death of Narcissus.

I had contracted a spring cold, which was not unusual, except that I had been entirely free of any kind of disease for the last couple of years. I was in the bathroom when this episode began. I had bathed and shaved, and I was rubbing a cleansing pad on my face. Suddenly my flesh began to feel very "massy" and unpliable. I felt as if the pores of my face had closed. The skin became dry and impervious to air. As I looked at my face in the mirror, it appeared gray, disturbed and deathlike. The saliva in my mouth stopped flowing, and I was overcome by a rising anxiety that became an awesome and overwhelming fear of death.

I was fixed in the knowledge that I was soon to go mad and die, but I tried as much as possible simply to observe this process in myself. I said good-by to Nina, telling her nothing of this, and left for school.

When I sat down to my first morning class this process was still going on in me. There was simply this absolute fear, and all my physical and mental processes seemed to be rushing to disappear and die. As I listened to the lecture on church history, I felt as if my mind were a separate, material entity. It seemed to be rushing forward at an invisible point with accelerating speed. I felt as if I were to go violently insane on the spot. I began to write very rapidly in my notebook, to maintain an orderly occupation, while I tried to remain as the observer of this event.

I wrote every word the professor spoke, and, if there was a moment of silence, I would write whatever I was observing in the room or in my body. Somehow I managed to get through the fifty minute lecture. When it was over I sat by myself. My body felt in a fever and my mind close to delirium.

The whole experience seemed to summarize all the parts of the many experiences of fear and sickness and near madness I had known in my life. It was as if every one of those experiences was an event of this same kind, which could have led to some marvelous perception if only I were able to allow the death or madness to take its course.

But in this instance, as in the past, the shock and awesome fear were too great to be allowed without resistance. I had taken a few cold pills in the previous days, and so I left school to go to a doctor, hoping for advice. The doctor said

the pills were mild and not aggravating or narcotic. He attributed my heightened sensitivity and alarmed condition to perhaps overwork or some kind of nervous excitement.

None the less, I stopped taking the cold pills. I went home. All day I stretched alone on the floor of the living room, revolving in this same overwhelming fear of death. When Nina came home she tried to make me comfortable, and I passed the evening in front of the TV set, observing my terror.

When Nina went to bed I also tried to sleep. But the fever of the experience only increased. Finally, I woke her in the middle of the night and asked her to take me to the hospital. My breathing had become alarming, and my heart seemed to be slowing down. At times my heart would beat irregularly and seem to stop.

She drove me to a nearby emergency ward. I was examined by a nurse, and then a psychiatrist, who told me I was having an anxiety attack. There was nothing apparently wrong with me physically. He gave me a sleeping pill and told me to rest. If I felt no relief within a couple of days, I should seek psychiatric help.

Finally, on the third day after this process began, I was lying home alone in the afternoon. It was as if all my life I had been constantly brought to this point. It seemed that all of the various methods of my life had constantly prevented this experience from going to its end. All my life I had been preventing my death.

I lay on the floor, totally disarmed, unable

to make a gesture that could prevent the rising fear. And thus it grew in me, but, for the first time, I allowed it to happen. I could not prevent it. The fear and the death rose and became my overwhelming experience. And I witnessed the crisis of that fear in a moment of conscious, voluntary death. I allowed the death to happen, and I saw it happen.

When that moment of crisis had passed I felt a marvelous relief. The death had occurred, but I had observed it! I remained untouched by it. The body and the mind and the personality had died, but I remained as an essential and unqualified consciousness.

When all of the fear and dying had become a matter of course, when the body, the mind and the person with which I identified myself had died, and my attention was no longer fixed in those things, I perceived or enjoyed reality, fully and directly. There was an infinite bliss of being, an untouched, unborn sublimity, without separation, without individuation, without a thing from which to be separated. There was only reality itself, the incomparable nature and constant existence that underlies the entire adventure of life.

After a time, I got up from the floor. I walked around and beamed joyfully at the room. The blissful, unthreatened current of reality continued to emanate from my heart, and not a pulse of it was modified by my own existence or the existence of the world. I had acquired a totally new understanding. I understood Narcissus and

the whole truth of suffering and search. I saw the meaning of my whole life to that moment. Suffering, seeking, self-indulgence, spirituality and all the rest were founded in the same primary motivation and error. It was the avoidance of relationship in all its forms. That was it. That was the chronic and continuous source of our activity. It was our very activity. It was the chronic avoidance of relationship. We were always conceiving ourselves in separation, and so the mind became the form of limitation, mortality and fear. Thus, we were forever suffering, seeking, indulging ourselves, and modifying our lives for the sake of some unknown goal in eternity.

Life appeared to be determined by this one process of avoidance. It was the source of separation and un-love, the source of doubt and unreality, of qualification and loss. But in fact there is only relationship, only love, only the unqualified state of reality.

In the weeks that remained to my first year at seminary I tried again and again to communicate my experience and my new knowledge. I was not in the same position I had been in college. This experience was fundamental and complete. I felt it could not be lost or modified by any events, any return of old tendencies. This was the primary knowledge I had sought all of my life. The "bright" was consumed in it. My experience in college was merely a symbol for it. All that I had come to see as a result of Rudi's discipline, all of the functioning apparatus of our

spiritual being, all worlds, all possibilities, all powers were merely a distraction from this primary knowledge. I identified that knowledge as the primary sense of relationship. Not separation, not even union, but unqualified relationship or non-separation arose in me as the radical sense of existence.

IX

In the fall of 1967 I took my leave from the church. To date, even the crisis of understanding that overcame me in seminary was yet an incomplete reversal of my life. It marked only the beginning of my independence. I had passed through fear, terror and death, and what was beyond them stood out as a primary sense that was only gradually becoming intelligence.

The patterns of my life had brought the long time of effort that culminated in my meeting and work with Rudi. But all that effort brought me lately to this other crisis in understanding. I was brought to recognize something more fundamental than seeking and effort. I saw that it was not a matter of any work in consciousness or life, but of somehow constantly abiding in what is always already real. I called that reality "relationship."

From that time I was moved to pursue this truth in a totally new way. As a result of the experience of "death" in seminary I saw that my entire life, even my spiritual effort, was only a

complex adventure of avoidance, the avoidance of primary, radical relationship as the always present form of reality. That was the way of Narcissus.

It seemed to me then that real life was a matter of constantly realizing relationship as the radical category or form of life on every level. Thus, it no longer was a matter of effort and seeking, but of simply and directly maintaining this true understanding under all conditions.

Everyone, including my friends in the religious community, and even Rudi, tended to interpret my seminary experience negatively. In time, I realized that I was approaching these people as if my experience had posed a problem for me, whereas in fact it had removed the problem and every sense of dilemma. I saw that these people and my own efforts were constantly recreating the sense of dilemma and turning life into an effort to overcome some conceived obstacle. I wanted my experience to be acknowledged as the sublime truth it was. I wanted my "madness" to be communicated and accepted as our real state. But everyone was offended by my radical, impulsive energy.

Thus, after several months in which I tried to find a way to fit myself into some form of religious career, and to maintain my work with Rudi on some kind of basis suitable to us both, I finally decided to abandon my old ways. I stopped trying to communicate my experience and my understanding. I began to try and live on its basis.

Rudi sensed that I was departing from the yoga of work and surrender, but there was no con-

versation between us that indicated any radical disagreement. I continued as before, but now I proceeded with a sense of ease, of prior fulfillment, free of the need to strive for any kind of overwhelming goal.

I had seen the futility of effort. I saw that it was only another form of avoidance, just like the very patterns I was always trying to surrender. The effort of work and surrender had proven to me the impossibility and fruitlessness of that whole path. The entire basis of struggle by which I had guided myself since college fell away in a graceful calm.

I found work in a bookstore, and simply made my living in an effortless way. I enjoyed the freedom of simple ability. I was merely present. There was no problem.

One day I was sitting with Rudi in the store. I found a couple of publications from the Ashram of his Guru, Baba Muktananda, in India. At first Rudi seemed reluctant to let me read them. He made fun of the Indian way of teaching, saying that it was very traditional and that one really needed to work very hard to get anything from his teacher.

But I managed to read the pamphlets while Rudi busied himself with his customers. The writings were little compendiums of Baba's teaching. As I read them, I began to discover parallels to my new unburdened sense of spiritual life.

Baba said that spiritual life was not a matter of effort on the part of the disciple. It was a matter of the Guru's grace, his free gift. The disciple needed

only to come to the Guru and enjoy his grace. It was as easy as flowers in sunlight. He said that once the disciple received the Guru's grace the various phenomena of spiritual experience would come automatically. Meditation and purification would occur naturally, without effort. Indeed, the attitude of effort was an obstacle to the disciple's progress.

I looked at Baba's picture on the wall, and that of Swami Nityananda, his Guru. I began to feel that these were in fact the sources of spiritual growth and wisdom to which my efforts had drawn me when I first came to Rudi. It appeared as though Rudi had been given me as a means of purifying me from my own sense of seeking and effort. Rudi's way had duplicated my own path until such a time as I could despair of it and so become available to the graceful truth.

When I got up to leave I was filled with a determination to go to India myself. During the next few weeks I managed to secure a position as a ticketing agent with Pan American Airways. This seemed to me an ideal opportunity for travel that would make it possible for me to go to India.

Shortly after the beginning of the year, in 1968, I was told that I would be able to make use of a two-day earned vacation and a 90% discount in air fare. If I could manage to trade days-off with some fellow employees I could stretch that leave into six days. I immediately arranged for my vacation to fall in late March and the beginning of April, and I began to make arrangements for Nina and me to go to India.

I was determined in this course, although I knew that it would probably mean a break with Rudi. I told him my plan, and he reluctantly gave me the address of Baba's Ashram. I continued to try and maintain my relationship with him, but an obvious distance had grown between us that neither of us was willing to communicate. I loved Rudi dearly, and I will be forever grateful for his help. He remains one of the major influences in my life. But I was about to pass into a fullness of my own that demanded a rather painful separation.

The weeks passed. The task of arranging for the trip seemed filled with endless obstacles. But I managed to create a schedule of flights that would enable us to go to India and return in a little more than six days. We would return only a day later than I was allowed, and this I felt would not be so long that I would be likely to lose my job.

I wrote to Baba and received a letter from his secretary, Amma. Our visit would be welcomed, although they would prefer us to come for a longer time and at a period in the year when the weather around Bombay was not so hot.

I wrote them that the period of our visit was fixed by my employers. I told Baba that I believed fully in his grace. I recalled the story of an Indian prince who once ordered a saint to bring him to the full realization of truth in the time it took him to place his foot in the stirrup and swing his leg over the saddle of his horse. The prince became enlightened the instant he stepped

into the stirrup, and he fell to the ground to kiss the feet of the saint.

I made it clear to Baba that I was coming to receive everything he had to give me. I would only have four days at the Ashram, and I didn't know when I would be able to return again. I humbly offered these conditions as a limitation that I could not prevent, and asked Baba to bless me with everything that was necessary for me to enjoy the perfect knowledge of reality.

I also wrote to him about my life, my experiences in childhood and college, my work with Rudi, and the incomparable awareness that now resided in me since my experience in seminary. I told him how I had been led to Rudi and then at last to the Ashram, and how I felt that he was the ultimate source of grace to which I seemed to be moving all my life. I also asked his blessing for our safe arrival. And so we prepared for the adventure that seemed to promise a perfect gift of truth.

X

We flew to Bombay via London and Beirut, and arrived on April 2, 1968. We landed about 4 a.m. and were met by Peter Dias, an Indian devotee of Baba. He was to be our interpreter and communicator during our first couple of days at the Ashram. He arranged for a private car, and we set out on a two or three hour drive toward Ganeshpuri, the home of Baba's Ashram.

When we drove up to the door of the Ashram

I was excited beyond words. Peter led us into a small room where Indian men and women in various degrees of obvious wealth or poverty sat in separate groups on the floor. Sitting in a throne of cushions, wrapped below the waist in a light saffron cloth, was Baba.

Something was said to him in Hindi as we entered. He made an energetic greeting of "Ah" and "Hm," and we bowed at his feet. He welcomed us through Peter, who translated his remarks rapidly. Baba spoke no English. We were told to rest and refresh ourselves and come to sit with him in the early afternoon.

When we returned to the hall in the afternoon Baba was seated again in his usual place. I sat in the lotus posture on the floor with the men, directly in front of Baba. Nina sat to the side with the women. At first there was a brief conversation about our trip, and then we got down to business.

I felt my letters were a sufficient introduction to my past and my purpose. The limitation of speaking through an interpreter seemed to make lengthy conversation more of a burden than an instrument for instant communication. And so, after a few brief remarks about how I had studied with Rudi and come to feel that true realization could not be accomplished through effort, but depended entirely on the grace of a true Guru, I asked Baba to teach me the truths of spiritual life.

He began a long and somewhat pedantic monologue on the truth of Advaita Vedanta. "You are not the one who wakes or sleeps or dreams. You are the Witness to all of these states."

He made a big point about how pleased he was that I could sit comfortably before him in the lotus posture. Firm posture is the beginning of the true spiritual attitude, he said.

As he talked, or even while he sat in silence and listened to people chant the Bhagavad-Gita or the ancient Vedic hymns, he was a constantly fascinating field of movement. His hands continually moved about him, either communicating with a gesture, touching his face, or adjusting the beads around his neck. His hands and his features were a perpetual motion, as if his cells were pulsing with an absolute energy.

During our first meetings he made no attempt to teach me how to meditate or respond to his Presence. And so, while I sat with him, I began to make an effort to surrender and open to him deeply, the habitual exercise I had learned with Rudi. His words seemed to me quite formal and not particularly created for my benefit. My questions and my simple presence seemed only to be an occasion for him to speak to everyone about the general topics of Indian spirituality.

As the first afternoon passed, many people came and went. Each of them bowed at Baba's feet, leaving gifts of money, fruit or flowers. Soon I began to feel quite comfortable. I was glad when there seemed no need for me to ask questions or appear particularly visible.

I simply worked at the spiritual exercise I had learned, and the Ashram routine proceeded around me automatically. Baba's discourses contained nothing new. It was the same familiar teaching from

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the books on Vedanta and yoga. And I was a little disappointed that he made no attempt to teach me anything on a verbal level that would change or confirm my state of mind.

But, after all, I had come for miracles, not discussion. I felt there must be something beneath the outward formality of the Guru and his Ashram that would turn my life around. Then, as I became more concentrated and attuned to the internal mechanisms that I had come to know through the work of surrender and the Force, I felt a new and more powerful Presence. I felt the same Force or Shakti that I had experienced with Rudi, but it seemed magnified into an almost muscular power.

After about an hour or so, Baba and his Indian devotees began to chant the Bhagavad-Gita, as was the custom every afternoon. While I sat and observed this ritual, my whole body began to swell up with an incredible fullness. Baba sensed what was happening to me, and he would often gesture to me with his eyes or make his characteristic "Hm" sound of approval.

As the chanting continued, the Shakti began to create violent movements in my body. These were the "kriyas," the purifying activity of the Shakti as it moves through the various nerve channels and the physical form. My back began to move around involuntarily in jolts, the way I had seen it affect others in Rudi's class. And my head began to jerk and revolve rapidly.

I felt a powerful fullness, and my mind and my entire being were filled by a wonderful bliss. It was an experience to which I had become ac-

customed with Rudi, but now it was much stronger, undeniable, and it seemed to be approaching a violent state beyond my control, so that I would often fall over backwards into the wall or sideways to the floor.

Even after the chanting was finished and Baba began to carry on conversations with his visitors, these movements and this bliss continued. Finally, Baba said to me, "Now I've got you." He smiled, and left the room.

The movements increased and became my constant occupation during the few days of our visit. The "kriyas" became so strong in me that Baba began to call me "Kriyananda," one whose bliss is in the purifying movement of the Divine Power. Only one or two others seemed to be experiencing similar effects, but I assumed mine was a common experience. Everyone seemed pleased that I was experiencing Baba's grace, and it seemed particularly good to them because I was a Westerner.

Our days were spent sitting with Baba during these sessions of chanting and conversation in the morning and afternoon. We would also get up about 5 a.m. and meditate in the hall outside Baba's room. He would walk around in the dark with a flashlight and spend a few moments in front of each of us watching our meditation.

We were also allowed to sit with him while he rested on the Ashram grounds after lunch. We would sit around him on the ground outside the cowshed and ask him questions while he petted the young calves.

Nina's experience has always been much qui-

eter than my own. Here, as before, she experienced a graceful calmness. Baba gave her a "sari" to wear, and he would often gift her with a flower or a fruit that he had blessed with his Shakti. And we would hear him answer questions about meditation, vegetarian diet, or the process of initiation by the Guru's touch or thought called "Shaktipat."

One morning I was sitting in meditation, watching Baba's form. Suddenly, he jumped out of his chair and rushed toward me, shouting the name "Kriyananda!" And he pressed his hand to my head, with one finger hard against my left eye. I fell into a swoon of bliss. The violent kriyas stopped, and I sat in a trance, still fully aware of what was going on around me. While everyone stood around and watched me, my hands raised up and performed mudras, the hand poses that you see in Indian dance and the statues of Buddhas.

All of this was quite remarkable, except I was experiencing an inner state that was not calm but more and more exhausting. I seemed to be involved in a kind of super-effort of internal work of the same kind I had known with Rudi. The more deeply I surrendered the more these movements seemed to take hold of me. But my experience also seemed to depend on this great effort. I was getting very tired and disturbed by the pressure of this work, and I wondered how to recapture the sense of ease and grace that had motivated me to India.

I asked Baba about meditation. He told me that it should be a mere act of witnessing, not an effort.

I should only sit calmly and observe the working of the Shakti in myself. I should relax, and with each cycle of breath recite the mantra So-Ham (I am He, I am the Divine or the Guru), or the primary sound "Aum."

Peter also told me about the manner of meditation Baba traditionally recommended. He said it was not like Rudi's work at all. The Shakti didn't come out of the teacher's eyes and descend into the body by the work of surrender before it rose up the spine. The Guru awakened it and it rose by itself from the base of the spine toward the head. Then the various kriyas and visions should come quite naturally, while we remained in a state of calm witnessing.

This was a new idea of meditation for me. It seemed right, and it certainly corresponded to my new intuition of how it should be, but I had grown accustomed by years of effort to the forceful work of surrender. An equally great effort seemed required in order simply to allow the Shakti, the Divine Power, to do the work. Thus, no matter how hard I tried, I seemed unable to break the old habit of meditation. I even felt afraid that if I dropped the habit of effort the movements and experiences would cease. Indeed, when I finally managed simply to relax in Baba's presence, I merely settled into ease and nothing peculiar happened.

The four days of our visit quickly neared an end. The new idea of meditation and Baba's teaching of Vedanta seemed to be the limit of what I was to receive. When the last day arrived I was somewhat

desperate. I had come for more than this. I had come for everything.

Baba no longer called me "Kriyananda." And it seemed that I had only accomplished a stronger version of the same experience I had with Rudi, only at last to see it fall away as well. I was disappointed, and when I sat with Baba in the morning I did little more than sit. I had consigned myself to mere witnessing, and the movements ceased. It seemed that I was only caught up in the Ashram chit-chat. But I could not imagine that Baba would let me come all this way only to leave with a little instruction. I was still in a state of confusion about the way of effort and its effects, and the seemingly arid and academic preaching of truth and meditation that Baba offered.

We took lunch, and afterwards I went to our room to get my hat. The sun was violently hot, and I intended to spend my last couple of hours walking around the Ashram grounds. When I got to the room I felt a profound urge to lie down and rest. I thought I should just lie down for a few moments, but I didn't want to fall asleep and waste my last precious hours.

As soon as I lay down, I passed into a sleep-like trance. I lost all bodily consciousness and every sense of my mind and personality. But there was also a profound state of consciousness that was absolutely calm, uncontained, and free. I felt as though I existed only as consciousness itself. There was no other experience, no thought, feeling or perception. Except that I seemed to exist as infinity, and awareness was concentrated above,

at some unfathomable point, beyond space and yet above me. As I concentrated in that "point" I felt an infinite form of bliss, an absolute pleasure of fullness and brilliance that completely absorbed my being.

Then I seemed to pass from this incomparable state into forms of consciousness that involved thought or perception. There were visions of levels of being beyond the human, and I witnessed what appeared to be other worlds or realms of conscious being that pertained to levels of mind beyond our ordinary life.

Then I heard a loud, roaring sound that at first seemed to surround me like a great room. I awakened to bodily consciousness. The sound was my own breathing as it rushed through my lungs and throat. But I did not perceive these things from within my body. I was fully aware as a consciousness that transcended all form and which at best surrounded and breathed my body.

Just then, Nina entered the room, and with a sudden jolt I resumed my ordinary awareness, as if contained within the body. I have no idea how long this experience had lasted, but it was now time to pack and prepare to leave. I didn't speak to Nina, but tried to remain concentrated in what remained of this unusual experience.

As I went about preparing to leave and walked from our bungalow to the hall where Baba sat, I began to understand the nature of my experience. What Baba had communicated to me in the dry discourses of our afternoons had been delivered

to me as living truth. I had awakened as the Self, the Witness, the ultimate Reality of the ancient Scriptures!

Whereas we ordinarily remain conscious as the capsule entity contained in the body, I had awakened as the one who truly is the life and consciousness of the body and all things. I had seen consciousness move from that absolute and most prior state down through the levels of being toward bodily consciousness. I had seen bodily consciousness from the point of view of the Self, Siva, or Siva-Shakti, the universal Being that lives all things. Ordinarily we identify with the point of view of bodily consciousness; either we strive to survive as that dying entity in the face of all obstacles, or else we try by spiritual effort to attain the realization of Self or Divine Consciousness. But I awakened as that Self, and everything is always and already being "lived."

Every sense of limitation and false self-awareness had fallen away from me. What I had fathomed in the various difficult crises and illuminations of my life had been given to me whole, in a single moment of perfect experience, without limitations of any kind. I knew with absolute certainty that I was not the seeker or the one trapped in life, but everything was only being lived by the Divine Being, and I was that One.

The entire truth of all the Scriptures, East and West, had been realized in my own conscious experience. There was no longer any need for effort, for seeking. There was no primary dilemma.

I had given the Guru four days to illumine me, and he had given me everything, for free.

Like the prince from his horse, I fell at Baba's feet and touched them with my head. He slapped my back approvingly, and we took our leave. No mention was made of my experience. We carried our luggage to a waiting bus, and, feeling like prisoners under guard, moved out of Ganeshpuri toward America.

A man and his wife who had been staying with Baba were given charge of us for the night. We were to fly home the next morning. We travelled with the man by bus and train to a beautiful little town near Bombay called Mulund. His wife had gone on a few hours before to prepare for our arrival.

I felt so free and fulfilled, and yet sad to be leaving my Guru. It seemed as if I were being taken away from the very source of grace I had been seeking all my life. But that night, as I lay down to sleep, I experienced again the state of perfect consciousness I had known in the afternoon, pressed above into infinite bliss, and I passed to sleep, surrendered without effort into the motherhood of my own being.

When we arrived again in New York I wrote to Baba to thank him for his grace, and I described in detail my experience that last afternoon at the Ashram. I began to live in this state continually, always aware that I was not the body or the mind, not the one who wakes or dreams or sleeps, but the Witness to all these things. It was not a mental supposition, but an actual

experience. It was the perfect fulfillment of what I had experienced in seminary as "unqualified relationship."

I asked Baba to write me about the method of meditation I should adopt. All motive for effort had passed from me, and all that seemed necessary was a gentle concentration in my own Self-nature.

In my daily living I simply rested in the consciousness that everything is being lived. In meditation I passed into the fullness of an inclusive consciousness that transcended all thought and perception. There was no sense of dilemma in me. When I was not rested in my own primary nature as the Self or Reality, I would perceive that same nature as a Presence that surrounded me and all things.

When I met Rudi the signs of my transformation were obvious. I felt no need at all to engage in the form of exercise he prescribed. But when I went to his class and performed it as usual, the "kriyas" and the sense of internal conflict that motivated me in that work appeared again, and I could feel it as a familiar knot or cramp in my solar plexus. Thus, I began to see Rudi less and less, although there was no argument between us and no communication of the difference.

For the first two or three weeks after our return to New York I lived and felt and knew as the Divine itself. There was no separation in consciousness, no distracting tendencies, no impurities, and not a trace of dilemma. But, gradually, as the weeks passed, I began to witness the piecemeal return of old sensations and thoughts, then

the desires that follow them, and then the actual practice of old habits. When I would sit to meditate in the effortless manner Baba had taught me I would feel these old problems. And it became a matter of conflict in me somehow to make these feelings vanish.

Life in New York seemed to require an energy of involvement that itself created conflict and the mind of effort. So that soon I began to pursue the state I had known in India. It became a problem in me to regain that state. The thing that I had known relieved all effort and amounted only to a free enjoyment of perfect knowledge. But now it began to seem unavailable, a goal requiring another kind of effort.

At first this change was only subtly perceived. I could not admit that I had lost the fundamental reality that had appeared to me at the Ashram. But, gradually, I began to realize, to my horror and despair, that the mind and all its conflict of desire was rising again, untouched by any illumination.

This became a very disturbing reversal for me. I had thought that the revolutionary awareness of my true nature would be sufficient to destroy every vestige of clinging to the habitual influences of the mind. I thought that knowledge would be purification enough, so that life need only be lived under the direct assumption of what I am in reality.

But this knowledge was not enough. The mind in conflict arose by itself and brought with it all desires and every motive for seeking. Yet, I was

unwilling to adapt myself to effort and strife again. It seemed that my Ashram experience had added something vital that fulfilled and extended the awareness that grew in me during my crisis in seminary.

But now that experience, because it held before the mind a kind of proof of the ultimate nature I had sought, served as a goad to seeking, a ground for the demand for that revelation as a continuous state.

I waited for Baba's letter, hoping that it would bring a new blessing and clarify my trouble. But many weeks passed without a word, and I felt stuck with a vision of internal contradiction that even exceeded the one from which I had been relieved in college.

Now the mind itself, apart from any particular content, appeared as the source of our dilemma, and I wondered by what means the mind should pass and let me be.

XI

From the spring of 1968 until the early summer of 1969 I attempted to resolve the problems of radical consciousness by a concentrated effort to dissolve or disarm the ongoing, limiting effects of the mind. For the time being, it seemed that the stream of thought and the automatic pattern of motivations arising moment to moment was the primary obstacle to real consciousness.

I spent that year working in an organization called Scientology, which is a quasi-religious movement devoted to the systematic liberation of man from his conditioned mentality. My attention was drawn to every kind of pragmatic recovery of the memories and subliminal reactions that enforce patterns of thought and behavior. But the more I pursued these means, the more endless the content of the mind appeared to be. And I began to realize that I had already produced this experiment in myself during my period of writing in California.

Thus, in time, the impetus behind this experiment revealed its own fruitlessness, and the energy behind it simply wore down and disappeared. The result of this quieting and disinterest in the problem of the mind was a simple, effortless return to the state of awareness I had enjoyed at the Ashram, and in the dramatic moments of exhilaration and understanding I had known in seminary, in college, and in the natural clarity of my childhood.

One evening, while I was relaxing after a day of concentrated work in some of the Scientology exercises, there was a sudden, unexpected abandonment of all my resistance to the internal operation of the "Shakti." All the centers of my being relaxed, without apparent cause, perhaps only because there was no absorbing motive to contract or concentrate them. All tasks, all efforts, all problematic approaches to the realization of existence simply ended in me. Then the Shakti, the natural power of conscious existence, moved

freely through me, taking the mind and all my reasons with it.

This event took place in Los Angeles in May of 1969. I quickly returned to New York and arranged my separation from Scientology.

In the weeks that followed I became aware of a new dimension of the activity of the Shakti. Not only was my own state expanded in its Presence, but the people who were closest to me began to experience the effects of Shakti through contact with me. This was particularly true of my wife and a young woman named Patricia Morley, whom we had met in Scientology and who had since come to live with us. And there were several others who seemed drawn by this Presence that had begun to operate through me.

At first I merely talked to them about my understanding of real spiritual life, and they began to discover parallels to this understanding in their own experiences and doubts. Then they began to have uncommon experiences of a Presence that affected them separately and in different ways while they were otherwise apart from me.

These experiences took the form of visions, or the sensation of a real but invisible Presence, or the sense of being sublimed and surrounded in a form of energy and fullness that quieted and clarified the mind. They would ask me about these experiences, and, before long, I found myself having to function as a teacher and an instrument for the Shakti.

My own state was so profoundly drawn into that Consciousness that I found no difficulty in

speaking to them and making recommendations that seemed wholly intelligent and even inspired. At times I even experienced visual communications of a psychic nature. I would see auras of light about the person, or see his thoughts appearing in my mind, or intuitively perceive certain images in his forehead or his body. I would also become directly aware of the Shakti as it passed through these people or was expressed in them, and I could easily trace the currents of energy and see where they became concentrated, halted or obstructed at the various vital points or "chakras." On more than one occasion I saw Baba appear and initiate a person with the Shakti by touch, and I could see a blue light appear and surround the person's body.

But the most common experience was one in which my own being and that of everyone I saw was contained in the inclusive form of the Shakti itself. Thus, I needed no uncommon visionary communications in order to intuit the nature of anyone's existence, experience or problem. These things were simply obvious to me on the level of uncommunicated, direct knowledge. I seemed merely to live in an inclusive intelligence that was not limited to my reflective awareness or my ability to read "signs." I simply knew the truth of what I perceived and had no sense at all of living as a separate, conditioned entity.

As all of this became more and more obvious and continuous I remembered that Baba told me I would become a spiritual teacher in about a year. It seemed now that this event was occurring

even without my volition or control. I wrote to Baba and informed him about my experience. I told him that I felt I needed instruction in the conscious use of these abilities. And I said that I did not wish to carry on this teaching without his consent and blessing. I asked him to give me the authority to teach, and to bless me in the traditional way by giving me a spiritual name. Baba replied by telling me to come to India as soon as possible.

XII

I flew to Bombay alone and arrived there on August 3rd. Peter Dias met me at the airport, and we took a taxi to the home of one of Baba's devotees in Bombay proper. Baba was to arrive that morning for an extended stay in the city, away from the Ashram.

He arrived about 11 a.m. I bowed at his feet and gave him a few gifts I had brought from America. Then there was a brief discussion about my trip. I would spend four weeks constantly in Baba's Presence, but this brief conversation was to be the only one we would have from that moment. Just prior to leaving I addressed him about an experience I had in meditation, but I have never since had a personal discussion with him.

I realized at that moment that I did not have a personal relationship with Baba. He did not appear to me as a human individual. There was not the slightest movement of interest on my part

in his personal attitudes, or anything that amounted to personality. But neither did I perceive myself as a personality in any exclusive sense. The revolution in my understanding of the mind and the ordinary adventure had finally removed any sense that "I" was an operation on the level of character and personal life.

The discussion of my trip, brief as it was, seemed totally beside the point. It was required of us under the circumstances, handled as a formality, but afterwards there was not a single attempt on Baba's part to communicate with me verbally. And, apart from bowing to him as I entered or left the room, I never again communicated with Baba man to man.

I retired to a position several feet away and in front of Baba. Apart from a brief trip to spend a few days at Baba's Ashram and the burial shrine of Bhagavan ("Lord") Nityananda, I spent the next four weeks sitting in this large meeting room or meditating in the area that adjoined Baba's bedroom.

We were staying in the expansive but very modestly appointed apartments of a captain in the Indian navy. At night I slept on a hard cot in a small room with another visitor. During the day and evening hundreds of people would come to sit in Baba's Presence, chant devotional hymns, and enjoy meals prepared by the women as an offering to Baba. In the early afternoon I would sometimes take exercise by walking in the nearby streets of Bombay. Sometimes I would go to a bookstore, or have a cab drive me through

the city. But the constant routine was to arise at 5 a.m., meditate, and sit with Baba for hours at a time. I would eat a light meal twice a day and rest briefly after lunch. And I would meditate almost constantly, either sitting before Baba or by retiring to a small room behind him.

I was rarely involved in conversations, but I passed through the weeks in a perpetual silence and internal solitude, observing the unusual phenomena that were arising in consciousness. After our first and terminal conversation I removed myself to sit among the men in front of Baba. I sat quietly, concentrated on Baba, and withdrew my attention within.

My own state at the time was uncommon. I was no longer engaged in a continual experience of the mind rising in thoughts, impulses and memories. This had ceased to occupy or interest me. Instead there was a continuous awareness of consciousness itself, witnessing not thoughts in the concrete mind, but forms of energy, space, vision, and pure self-awareness, without conflict, dilemma or identification with bodily limits.

As I sat with Baba I wondered if he could perceive my internal state. The brevity of our conversation seemed to indicate that he was aware that personal communication was only a formality and a distraction for me. Then, as I sat meditatively in his Presence, I became aware of existence totally beyond the physical body. My awareness moved in a space that was not in the concrete mind. I swooned and floated in a limitless void bright with cosmic force. As I

moved in that space I sensed that Baba was also with me. I wondered if he was aware of this cosmic adventure of spiritual being, and I opened my eyes. He was looking at me, smiling and swaying his head as if to imitate the movement of consciousness in limitless space. I smiled back at him, and took this sign as an acknowledgement of my own state. From then I assumed that Baba knew why I had returned to him, and I looked to experience his teaching on a purely internal level.

My first impression of Baba and his teaching, which I had experienced at the Ashram a year before, was, among other things, a communication on a verbal and personal level. There was a personal relationship, a practical philosophy, and a consistent address to my personal problems and seeking. My year in Scientology had been an extension of that first impression. Scientology paralleled the typical Indian view, wherein certain aspects of concrete experience are approached as a problem or degree of impurity, and by various means it is sought to remove these impositions and return to an elemental and prior state of purity and consciousness.

Thus, Baba had concentrated on teaching me philosophy, methods of purification and meditation, approaches to various obstacles in life, etc. But as a result of my year of experimenting with the purification of the mind by concentrating on its content, the whole process of memory and reaction, I no longer resided in the limited view of the personal problem and its psychology. I

had become conscious of a present activity that was consciousness itself, and had begun to intuit the data in consciousness on a level that transcended the concrete and personal instrument.

I felt that I had now begun to realize experience on a new level. The forms in consciousness were no longer of a mostly personal nature, implying a separate and human identity as its basis. Now I perceived the contents of consciousness as forms of energy and super-consciousness, above the level of the concrete mind.

When I sat in Baba's Presence or in meditation I was immediately drawn to concentrate at a point in the aperture of the head, in the crown, and even to some intuited point above the head. Thus, I focused in uncommon perceptions of the universal Shakti. Baba seemed to recognize this, and he made no effort to approach me personally, even with common friendliness, as if such communication would only awaken and reinforce the activity of identification on a lower level.

Thus, I left myself, and was left by those around me, to experience existence purely on a spiritual or super-conscious level. And I spent my month in India in constant meditation on this level of perception. I began also to experience communication from Baba entirely on the level of intuitive consciousness, without the addition of verbal address. It was a time of God-like existence.

Shortly after lunch on the first day of my visit I received Baba's blessing in the form of a new arousal of the Shakti energy. He came from

behind me and entered the large sitting room as if to pass to his seat. I expected him simply to pass by. But he stopped suddenly and patted me on the head several times. Then he went on to his seat in the corner of the room.

I remained seated on the floor with the others, listening to Baba's conversation with various visitors. But as the minutes passed I felt a strong energy in my back that soon took over my entire spine and body. The Shakti finally concentrated very powerfully in the head, particularly at the very top, where I had been experiencing the urge to meditate.

After about half an hour I passed naturally into very deep meditation. I was concentrated and contained in a super-conscious force. The "kriyas" in the body were almost entirely absent. Then I saw the image of Bhagavan Nityananda. He was facing me as I had seen him in a photograph, with a wide expression in his face and eyes, as if he was beholding the form of some deity. His hands were raised to the sides of his face, and his fingers and palms spread as if they contained and generated a tremendous force of blissful energy.

After several minutes this image disappeared, and I took over the form of Bhagavan Nityananda myself. My eyelids opened wide, and my eyes rolled up toward the top of my head. My hands rose up beside my face. The palms and fingers splayed, and I could feel the Shakti flowing in my body and my head, passing out toward Baba in benediction. I sat like this for perhaps an hour. I experienced only an absolute bliss and calm,

and an overwhelming power flowed through me into the room. I seemed to behold and hold a sphere of energy in my hands. And then I saw that it was reality itself, the form and force of all existence, including all the universes and every form.

When at last I opened my eyes and resumed my ordinary state in the body, Baba was standing beside me in the room. We smiled at each other, and he reached toward me. I reached out to him with my hand, and we grasped each other's hand in the blissful communication of that energy.

In the morning it became my practice to rise at 5 a.m. and sit outside Baba's room for meditation. A few others also sat around in silent meditation at the same time. Baba would come out a few minutes later and sit on some cushions against the wall, two or three feet in front of me. He did this for the first two or three mornings of my visit, as if to watch my meditation.

Finally, about the third morning, I had been sitting for nearly an hour. Meditation had become an immense problem. My mind was filled with all kinds of alternative programs and techniques. I battled with Rudi's method, then Baba's, with mantras coordinated with breathing, watching thoughts arise, and concentration in various chakras or centers. Soon I became merely confused and unsettled, and I intended to question Baba about meditation when I sat with him in company later in the morning.

But then Baba came out and sat before me in silence. And soon I began to experience an internal teaching about meditation. I was shown

the various internal centers and the various activities in the mind. Then I saw the Shakti rising out of the "muladhar," the lowest chakra, near the anus. And it rose of itself through the various centers. As it rose, each event in the natural process of meditation took place automatically. The breath became even and began to coordinate with the mind. I saw how the breath affects thought, and how thought affects the breath. Then a concentration replaced this activity of passive observation. Consciousness was directed above, between the brows, and then in the sahasrar, the highest internal center, in the crown of the head.

Each breath became not a mere physical process but a process directed by the Shakti, from the point of absolute consciousness rather than any focal point in the body. With each inhalation I felt the Shakti move out of the heart, down to the muladhar, up the spine, and center at the top of the head. Then, for a moment, the breath would halt, and I would enjoy a concentration and reception of energy and bliss above. Then, with each exhalation, the Shakti would move down from the crown of the head and return to the stillness of effortless being in the heart. As this process continued, consciousness and energy sublimed into a blissful awareness, an unqualified and natural form of participation in the root sources of reality.

After a while Baba left the room. I gradually returned to my ordinary state of bodily awareness, and I went in to sit with him and his visitors.

I wondered how much of this experience had either been deliberately created by him or at least consciously witnessed by him. I sought some evidence of the verity of internal communication between Baba and myself.

When I came into the room Baba was busy writing on a note pad. After a while he spoke to someone, and I was told that he was writing something for me. Later someone came and showed me what he had written. It was written in Hindi or Sanskrit and would have to be translated. But I was told that Baba had given me a name and he would bless me with it on August 9th, the anniversary of Bhagavan Nityananda's mahasamadhi (abandonment of the physical body).

Baba had apparently kept his promise to instruct me and give me a name, as well as the right to teach. But, as in all cases of gifts from such people, the reception in the disciple can act as a test. I immediately felt this fulfillment rise up as a barrier in me of pride and self-consciousness. When people go to such sources they get only as much as they seek and desire. Thus, I saw that if I made this gift the object of my stay, I would close myself off to the higher experience that I truly desired.

I nodded to Baba and thanked him, but I made no move after that to appear as if absorbed in that gift. And, as it happened, that gift was held before me by various delays and complications for nearly two weeks. The people around Baba felt his message had to be translated perfectly. Thus, it was handed from person to

person, a professor of English was awaited, there were disagreements on certain words, there was no time to type a final copy.

The Indian devotees seemed reluctant to give it to me at all, and they continually minimized its importance, although it was the first time a Westerner had formally and publicly been given a name by Baba. I was told that I was to be named "Dhyanananda," which means "one whose bliss is realized in meditation," "the bliss of meditation," or, more properly, "one whose bliss is in absolute surrender to his Self." The name had been created for me during that morning of internal teaching about meditation. Thus, Baba showed me that I could rely on the verity of non-verbal teaching.

The day of Bhagavan Nityananda's mahasamadhi passed. I thought perhaps Baba had forgotten. But as I sat in the rear of the room in the evening, Baba rose to go to bed, and he suddenly glanced toward me, almost shouting: "Dhyanananda!" I bowed to him and acknowledged the blessing.

I was told that Baba's letter would be prepared and given to me on August 15th, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the day on which he was blessed with Divine Consciousness by his Guru, Bhagavan Nityananda. But even that day passed with no indications from anyone. Finally, as I lay down to go to sleep, Amma, Baba's secretary, quickly entered the room and left again, leaving me the typed copy of Baba's letter.

Even after many days of professional trans-

lation the letter remains in a more or less primitive form. The language does not quite represent the flow of Baba's words, but I include it here as I received it:

You have sought and found peace in meditation. You have evinced keen interest in meditation. Since meditation has become the aim of your life, you are being hereby named as DHYANANANDA. You will hereafter be known as DHYANANANDA in the field of Yoga.

You are a promising student of Shree Gurudev Ashram. Chiti Shakti, the Kundalini, which brings about Siddha Yoga, is activated in you. You have also studied Vedanta. The Inner Self which is the secret of Vedanta, the basis of religion, the realization of which is the ultimate object of human life, is awakened in you.

Only he who has himself seen can show unto others. On the same principle you can now initiate others into meditation.

The scriptures declare that so long as you have unflinching faith in the Guru, so long as you remain immersed in the thought of God, so long as you have equal reverence for everyone, Kundalini, the divine power, will continue to help you fully in achieving your rightful share in material and spiritual wealth.

The Kundalini Yoga can be imparted to anyone since the Kundalini power exists in everyone and everything exists in Kundalini.

May you be blessed with the ultimate experience of oneness with God through the performance of your duty and through his worship in the form of meditation.

(SWAMI MUKTANANDA)

In the days previous to this Baba had indicated to a visitor that I was a yogi, thereby

giving me the right to that ancient title. Thus, for the world, I was to be known as "Sri Dhyanananda Yogi." But by now all such titles had ceased to bear significance for me. I took it as a very kind acknowledgement and let it pass. No one has ever called me by that name.

I recognized that this status was not properly my own. Baba himself had created the name as well as the experiences that gave me the right to it. He was acknowledging himself. I was careful to perceive this so as not to become identified with some idea of personal accomplishment. Baba had shown me how to meditate. He had meditated me. The yoga was the Shakti itself. The Shakti was the "yogi." It had nothing to do with "me."

Indeed, as the days passed and my experiences increased, I felt more and more as if I had entered someone else's wonderland. Baba is a Siddha, an accomplished yogi, with all of the various miraculous powers indicated in the Scriptures. Even he was given these things as a gift by his Guru. And all of these things at last were given by the Shakti herself, the Divine Mother. My experiences did not depend on me. Baba's experiences did not depend on him. We were all gratuitously accepted into the court of the Goddess, Shakti. The universe and all experiences were her game, and I was simply being allowed to see this game, not in order to acquire powers or status, but to recognize the source of all things and so remain free of all seeking.

During the time of my stay I experienced many

unusual things. For the first time in my life I enjoyed the continuous status of a visionary and the various miraculous abilities that are described in classical spiritual literature.

Many others who spent that month with Baba also appeared to experience unusual phenomena. I would spend a couple of hours every afternoon in the meditation room outside the hall where Baba sat with his devotees. The room was usually filled with people in meditation. Some sat silent and composed. Others performed spontaneous kriyas and mudras. Some danced or sat and moved their arms in the sinuous movements of dance. Some would suddenly laugh or cry aloud. Others sang or chanted, even where this was not ordinarily characteristic of them. Others saw visions and lights.

I thought of that place as the "swooning room." At times there was an incredibly powerful and irresistible force that would take one over bodily and mentally. I would crawl around on the floor, nearly blinded and immobile with intoxication. Others crawled too, and some barked and hooted like animals. At last I would lie prone on the floor as if I were pinned. My body would swoon away and I would spin into bliss.

Often, as I passed into deep meditation, I would leave the physical body and either witness or participate in events on various other planes. At times I would sit for long periods and witness an endless and automatic stream of images from various places. Some of these were merely the emanations of my own subconscious mind boiling

off under the influence of Shakti. But often I would see actual places and events in other worlds and planets through astral travel or movements in super-consciousness. There would be marvelous scenes, some of them appearing as sublime perfections of the earth environment, and others that appeared to be built out of a mathematical and geometric logic of creativity. Those higher worlds did not appear as solid and separate from consciousness, as is the case with ordinary consciousness on earth. They appeared to be present creations of consciousness itself, and experiences there, including the environments themselves, changed according to the consciousness of those who enjoyed them.

As all of these things passed I saw that there was no necessity, no seriousness to the whole affair of creation. It was merely a pattern and a play in consciousness, within which I should witness without suffering any sense of identity or a single modification in my own nature. I saw that reality was not this separate play of the Divine Shakti, but my own nature, the Self or Siva of the Scriptures.

On several occasions I entered these worlds in the form of a subtle body. Once I met Baba before a passage leading underground. We entered a cave where there was a huge dome of honey-white light in the floor. When we saw it we recognized it as a seat of the Divine, and we merged joyously within it. On another occasion I met Baba in the subtle world, and we gazed in one another's eyes. Soon we began to revolve

in opposite directions about the point of contact, merging into the same nature.

Then I also began to experience myself in the form of various deities and demons. I took on the graceful Buddha-like qualities and sat eternally calm in meditation. But then I would also take on the terrible forms of Siva, and my body and face twisted about in fierce expressions. I sat like the ferocious aspect of God, with skulls of blood and hatchets in my hands.

Near the end of my visit I felt I should communicate something of my experience to Baba, in order to acknowledge him and test my awareness. I told him how in meditation a spot of light had often appeared before me, sometimes black or silver-gray, and sometimes blue. I also described a vision in which I saw the muladhar appear below me as a Siva-lingam, a monolith often found in temples. Then I appeared below, my hands tied to the lingam in a gesture of prayer, pointing above. I rose up with the lingam into the sahasrar and experienced the perfect, infinite, unmoved Sat-Chit-Ananda, the pure existence-consciousness-bliss of the Indian Godhead, my own nature as the Divine Being of all the world's Scriptures. From this point of view I looked down again at the muladhar, and thousands of devotees were raising their hands prayerfully to me. Then I received the knowledge that if I remained concentrated in the sahasrar all of the experiences of realized consciousness would be given through me to others.

I asked Baba if I had received the true

meaning of the experience. He only said: "Yes. The experience was true. Concentrate in the sahasrar if you like. The Shakti will do everything. The spot you saw is blue. It only appears black because of impurities."

The "blue" spot is one of the seeds or atomic bodies that appear within our subtle form. It is said to be in the sahasrar. Baba calls it the supra-causal or cosmic body. It is the seed and abode of the Siddhas, beings who enjoy the perfect powers. They can be seen in a blue light that appears within. And this blue form or light is a favorite topic of Baba's mystical teaching. It seemed to me that his purpose for my present visit was to make me fully aware of these subtle dimensions and know their source to be the same that manifests our ordinary state.

Now my visit was nearing an end. My experiences were a seemingly endless revelation of the forms of spiritual reality. And I had acquired something of the ego of spiritual seeking and discovery. But I was already becoming aware of the inconclusiveness of all such experiences. Once the problem of the mind had ceased to endear me, I began to intuit spiritual forms. Then I acquired a new problem. The problem of spirituality. The matter of freedom and real consciousness seemed somehow to depend on the attainment of spiritual experience. Spiritual experiences of an ultimate kind seemed identical to freedom and reality itself. Thus, I was driven to acquire them.

But as these events unfolded they too became

common. The display of images, the transports to other worlds, the identification with modes of Divine Being, the perception of higher and subtler forms of my own identity and ability, all began to pass before me with less and less interest. .

I began to feel: "This is not the point. This is not it. Reality is prior to all of this. Reality is my own nature." But the more this feeling arose in me the more aggressively these experiences arose, so that I again began to feel trapped. I felt as if my true path was not Baba's Siddha Yoga. I was no longer moved by a desire for these experiences. They were nothing but more life, more patterns, more experiences calling up the process of identification, differentiation and desire. The search for spiritual experience, the motivation to achieve a living victory on the basis of a spiritual problem, seemed only another form of seeking, suffering and separative mentality. There was no radical difference between the higher and lower worlds. There was no radical advantage in *any* kind of experience.

I began to feel a resistance to Baba and the Shakti. I felt no need to continue this whole ritual of spiritual life, spiritual society, yoga, India, meditation, Guru, visions. I wanted the freedom to understand this whole miasma of personal and universal life. Thus, as the day approached on which I was to leave I began to welcome the opportunity to go home in peace. I was full of love for what I knew Baba to be in reality, but I sorely needed to get out of the spiritual game.

I had made arrangements to leave on a Friday,

at the end of August. But on Wednesday night, as I slept, I became aware of Bhagavan Nityananda's Presence. Then he appeared to me, and he spoke to me throughout the night of my experiences. He told me I should prepare to leave immediately, Thursday, the day before I had planned.

The next afternoon I took my leave of Baba. He patted my back in blessing and gifted me with arms full of flowers. He also gave me a huge red apple. I bowed to him gratefully and turned to leave. He was still waving to me as I approached the stairway. And as I began to descend the stairs I felt the beginnings of sickness in my stomach.

I flew to New York via Tel Aviv and Rome. On the first leg of travel I felt nauseated and overcome with fever, so that by the time I arrived in Tel Aviv I was quite ill with cramps and diarrhoea. As I sat waiting for my plane I felt exhausted and didn't know how I could travel comfortably. Then I remembered the apple. Baba had forced me to pay particular notice to it as I left. I thought that the necessity for my early leave and Baba's gift of the apple were perhaps all part of a plan created by the Shakti. A sickness which was to purify my body and nerves was about to come over me in my last days with Baba. And so my early leave had been planned.

I ate the apple slowly, wondering if it would possibly affect my illness. Almost immediately, the churning in my stomach and intestines ceased. The body became comfortable. The purifying work

of the apparent illness continued even for several days after my return to New York. But I continued tranquilly and comfortably, knowing the Shakti was at work. The whole experience had only been a sign of how the Shakti would continue to work for me according to its intelligence of my needs after I left Baba's Presence in India.

XIII

I arrived in New York on the 30th of August, 1969. The next nine months were a period of intense investigation into the problems of spiritual consciousness. I spent that time practically in seclusion.

Nina, Pat and I rented a loft in the Wall Street area. A few friends would sometimes come to visit or seek help in their spiritual life. I rarely left the apartment, and would spend many days at a time without even going into the street. Television became my main source of information about the world.

I spent my days in constant meditation. There were periods in every day when we sat for formal meditation, but meditation had now become for me a constant activity in consciousness. I wanted to probe deeply into the matter of spiritual experience in order to see it as a whole and recognize its primary wisdom.

To that point, spiritual life had been for me an experimental activity. It had not stabilized in a single force of understanding and real con-

sciousness. The traditions of spirituality seemed to me a mixed bag of many different forms of experience and interpretation. The goal of it all was not something that all saints, religions or scriptures acknowledged in common. The form of seeking and revelation was different in all cases. The description of the nature of the world was different in many cases, and amounted to at least two radical alternatives. There was the traditional Oriental view that the world is an illusion created by an error in Self-knowledge. And there was the traditional Western view that all of this was the creation of God. Some sought liberation, and others salvation. Some claimed identity with the Divine, whereas others claimed a radical, eternal distinction and even separation between the Divine, the human or the soul, and the various worlds.

I worked in order to realize the fundamental truth that was freedom and also real knowledge. And no one anywhere represented that truth to me without qualification.

I continued to teach. This often took the form of discussions about spiritual life, practice, meditation, and experience. People would come to discuss the ideas they gathered in various books. Some only wanted to hear comparative philosophy, learn secret techniques, or get information about various psychic phenomena. Some were concerned with healing, diet, what to do, what not to do. Some wanted estimations of various saints, organizations, religions. Some were looking for particular saintly qualities which

their reading had led them to expect in anyone who pretended to have spiritual experience. Most of them were not serious enough about the problems of existence to learn any more than the traditional spiritual gossip.

But several of them stayed long enough and approached the whole matter from a depth in themselves that made certain illumination possible. These people had "experiences," and began to meditate with real consciousness. Some of them would remain for a few months, and then I let them go. The phenomena I wanted my friends to attain were not spiritual in the ordinary sense, but a communication of reality in which they could found their lives. Thus, we came together for a while, and when I saw that they needed to be free to go, I let them go.

The two people closest to me were my wife, Nina, and Pat Morley. Nina has been not only my dear wife and companion but one of my closest disciples. She has come with me through the long adventure of spiritual events, and she has been a willing subject for every part of my experiments. Pat has also been not only a dear friend but a devotee. She is the very force of devotional love. Both of them have passed through the hourly expansions of this experience, and they are probably the best examples of its various phenomena.

Because of their closeness to me I have been able to observe in them the instant effects of my various approaches to these problems and to the forms of teaching. And they represent two extremes

of experience. Nina is not particularly prone to the typical mystical phenomena of spiritual life. This is not in any sense a sign of weakness in her, or an indication that her spiritual life is undeveloped. Indeed, I prefer to call the form of existence I try to teach by another name than "spiritual." The word "spiritual" carries all kinds of associations with an exclusive kind of experience in consciousness. It points to visionary phenomena, miracles and forms of perception that are symbolic, psychic and ultimately religious. But in fact real consciousness is unqualifiedly free. Its psychic depth is an unmodified field of awareness. And even where there is the experience of unusual phenomena on the way, such things are simply more material to be rendered in understanding.

Pat, on the other hand, quite readily moves into visionary and psychic phenomena. Before we met she had no peculiar experiences of this kind, apart from one or two childhood memories that resurrected themselves in meditation and revealed their hidden meaning. But in the process of the unfolding Shakti and the attainment of real meditation she has come to have many unusual experiences.

Both Nina and Pat, however, are peculiarly stable, loving, open, and largely free of overwhelming egotism and internal resistance. This is the common root that made this real consciousness possible for them.

It would be valuable at this point to include specimens of their personal observations about their experiences during the last few years. I asked each of them to write something about their ex-

periences in meditation and the general result of their practice.

The first essay belongs to Nina:

Feelings of calm, well-being, emotional stability. I experienced these feelings immediately, when I first began to meditate, and gradually over the years these feelings have deepened, so that now I experience them continually, even when not in the meditative state. I became aware of this just this year (1970), in late winter or early spring. It was startling.

Feelings of emotional relief and joy. These feelings were most pronounced early in meditation and were accompanied by laughing and weeping. They no longer characterize my meditation, but I have experienced them when not in the meditative state. Most recently I have felt that these feelings are also experienced by my husband at the same time, and he confirms it.

Feelings that I and everything, that life itself has a center. I experience the whole of everything. Yet each part, person, door, dog, cactus blooms for its own sake. This is not an intellectual understanding, so it is hard to say it, and I get intellectual talking about it. I become aware of this feeling generally when the opposite is asserted, as, for example, when something said on a TV program goes against this understanding. This understanding is very humorous, mainly because I know that every creature is aware of it too, but there is a lot of noise and argument and propositions and categorizing and statements like, "I can't on account of my back."

The most distinctive physical experience I have had came in 1966 after I had been studying with Rudi for nearly two years. Franklin and I had gone to Fire Island with Rudi for a weekend, in the summer. After spending the afternoon on the beach and with friends of Rudi, we had dinner with some other people from Rudi's class, and then Franklin and I went to bed. Rudi left to go to a party farther up the beach. I went to sleep and Franklin slept in another bed in the same room. Some time later I woke abruptly and heard Rudi blowing his nose very

loudly in the living room. At that instant I experienced a very strong electric shock. I felt electricity in every cell of my body. The shock tossed my body around on the bed, lasted just an instant, maybe five seconds, and stopped. I fell asleep immediately and didn't wake up again till next morning. I remember that I wasn't particularly amazed by the experience — just that it happened. It seemed very humorous and a rather un-divine way of experiencing Shakti.

In meditation I have experienced the Shakti-energy in my forehead. This feeling has always been present in meditation. It is a feeling first of a focus of energy in the center of the forehead, then the energy diffuses and spreads throughout my body, so that I am radiating this energy. This experience has been most pronounced and stable in recent years.

Pat's essay begins with a list of experiences she has had since I met her in Scientology in the fall of 1968. She also mentions experiences with Baba. These were the results of a trip that she, Nina and I made to the Ashram in June, 1970, and also a trip that Baba made to this country in the fall of 1970.

1. I started to fall asleep one night when something woke me. It was the sound of my throat and tongue clicking together. I became aware that I was not just that throat but was listening to it.
2. Sitting quietly in a room with Franklin. The room became very still, but I wasn't sure what was happening. After about an hour Franklin said he had a spiritual communication from Baba.
3. I was having dinner with Franklin when he looked up at me, and all of a sudden I felt a strong flow of energy coming from his face. My face became flushed and warm. I knew that he had done something deliberately and asked what he was doing to me.

4. While Franklin was in India I was doing exercises. I sat up when I was finished. I looked up at Baba's picture and kept staring at it for some time. I realized later I had gone into meditation for about one half hour with my eyes open.

5. I was sunbathing on the roof waiting to hear from Franklin in India. It was a beautiful day and I felt very good. I just lay down on my back and relaxed with my eyes closed. All of a sudden my body felt as though it was filling with energy from the sun, until it was vibrating gently from the inside.

6. While I was lying in the swing under the tree in the yard I began watching everything around me, especially the tree above. Everything was beautiful to me as if I was fully conscious of every part of life around me. The longer I watched the tree the more I became part of it, with nothing separating what I was from what the tree was. When I saw a squirrel move on a branch I felt part of it too. I can remember the thought running through my head that life was meant for singing and dancing.

7. When Franklin came back from India I would start to go into meditation while listening to him tell about his trip and experiences at the Ashram and with Baba. My eyes started to roll upward, my neck became stiff. Then I would feel very peaceful as if I could sit in that one spot forever.

8. I started meditating every day. Energy flowed through my whole body, especially in my hands. My back became rigid while meditating and my head ached painfully. Soon meditation became unpleasant and uncomfortable.

9. When I began having visions the pain ceased. I'd see serpents and become part of Indian paintings, see bright lights, and beautiful scenery while meditating.

10. Sometimes I would feel very strong as if I had the strength of a man, then a few minutes later I became soft and very feminine.

11. On one particular day I started feeling a tremendous love for everyone, especially toward Franklin, and felt a closeness, almost becoming part of him. While we were meditating I heard him breathing near me. I became that

breath going up and down his throat. Another time a shot of energy went through me directly from him and startled me.

12. This is a recurrent experience from childhood. It begins when I am a tiny pinpoint located in about the center of my body but not actually part of the body. The pinpoint starts expanding, and as it does my whole body shape is filled like air in a balloon. Then it keeps expanding the body shape, like the balloon stretching out of proportion, until I become as huge as the room, having no ending. This experience comes many times when I'm not in meditation, usually when I'm relaxed, lying down, ready to sleep. I remember experiencing this as far back as about 7 years old.

13. My meditating became quite blissful for a while but the feeling wouldn't last long when I stopped. Then movements started. My eyes rolled upward, sometimes fluttering, sometimes very painful, and my backbone became stiff, as if it had a steel rod keeping it in place. My hands would also become rigid in different positions. Then my whole body became rigid in a meditative position, without the usual aches from holding the position. Soon I would lose the feeling of my body altogether.

14. Some days I would smell beautiful perfumes. Baba spoke to me in meditation, telling me how to say "So-Ham" while meditating. Another time I heard the voice of a woman speak to me while I was meditating, telling me not to speak but that she would take care of everything. I did not have a vision of her but could hear her voice speak from inside my own body.

15. I began having visions of sitting at Nityananda's feet and seeing him in a red plaid flannel shirt looking very happy.

16. For a few weeks, every time I sat down to meditate I would lose consciousness, as if I had fallen asleep. When I woke I was quite relaxed and peaceful. My head would fall down to the floor and remain until I was awake again. When the sleeping stage ended, I began getting restless during meditation and couldn't sit still. My body ached, and my mind would not become quiet. As this stage ended my

meditation became just pleasant without any unusual happenings.

17. I started feeling a closeness to Baba only when we knew we were going to India. I wrote to Baba but didn't receive a written answer from him. One day while meditating I heard Amma's voice thanking me for Baba and telling me that he was happy to receive my letter. I received strong Shakti from Baba and had many wonderful experiences similar to those I had in the past. I felt the force even stronger when I went to Nityananda's Samadhi (burial place). My head would hurt, my eyes were pulled upward, and so much energy would fill my heart that I thought it would burst.

18. When Baba came to California I began having strong Shakti experiences, the way I did in India. I sat with him for many hours feeling the energy rush upward, pulling my eyes up. Then the pulling would stop and I would experience a beautiful calm.

19. Recently while meditating I started watching the energy travel from one center of my body to the other, from the stomach to the heart to the head. When I was startled by a noise the center where I was located responded and felt the jolt. I usually felt this in my stomach when I became nervous or frightened. One day I felt the noise in my heart.

20. Some days later I was having peaceful meditation when all of a sudden I became aware of a small, rectangular shaped, shiny gold spot in the center of my body across from my heart. It was a beautiful feeling and seemed quite important at the time. The energy was pouring inward toward this spot like it was the center of my life. Then my body began to tingle, and the energy slowly flowed from this center throughout the rest of my body.

When I meditate now I am no longer just trying to quiet my mind or to have many experiences. I have realized a consciousness during meditation which is continuing more evenly, whether I am meditating or not. Whenever I become depressed, upset or negative in any way I know I am not living with this consciousness. When I meditate I try not to block any sound, thought, suggestion or feeling from myself.

When I do this I become open to all of the experiences coming to me. I am not doing it for the purpose of these experiences, but to enjoy the consciousness of being part of all of life. This is happening more frequently now than in the past, whether or not I am sitting to meditate, and the consciousness is becoming more stable.

In Nina's case there were fewer of the kinds of peculiar phenomena that are characteristic of visionary experience. But in both cases the essential experience that becomes stably realized and valued is the same one of "being part of all of life" or experiencing "the whole of everything." This is the power of reality, of unqualified relationship, non-separation, no suffering, and no-seeking in the heart. This is in fact the primary experience and knowledge that obviates all particular experiences and motivations. My purpose has been to make this realization possible as the real foundation of conscious life. And when it comes it is not a mere idea or belief, or a feeling that depends on any circumstances. It becomes a function of actual consciousness, of unqualified being. Then it develops over time into radical knowledge and free creative existence.

XIV

During the following months I continued to have experiences of various kinds, as I had in India. Particularly at night, when the body was set aside, I experienced fully conscious meetings with various saints, yogis and miracle-workers.

I was allowed to witness miraculous demonstrations in a school for Siddhas, the yogis who practice various powers. I saw in detail the processes whereby such saints materialize objects and living things.

Even though physically separated from Baba, I would often experience his hidden Presence in miraculous ways. Frequently I would feel him acquire my body, so that I knew all of my functions had become his body. He would particularly take over my face and hands. I could feel my features adapting to the expression of his character and mood. The special formulation of the Shakti that works through him would pour through my hands and face. My mouth would twitch about my teeth in his peculiar manner. My fingers would automatically gesture in the manner by which he communicates sublime feeling, and the index finger would point above, to the sahasrar, to the holy place, the Guru and God.

In meditation I sometimes experienced Bhagavan Nityananda taking over my subtle form. I was expanded with a great force, and I could feel myself with dimensions larger than any conceivable space. Then I perceived his subtle breathing, and my abdomen took on the "pot-shaped" form known in Tibetan yoga.

These manifestations were not simply "internal." Frequently my perceptions coincided with certain external events. Thus, for example, a friend once came to see me after a long stay at the Ashram. We bowed to Baba's picture and felt the Shakti fill the room. Just then, the flowers that were

nailed about the portrait flew off and landed at our feet.

Along with these experiences, my own awareness seemed to be developing along unique lines. The various phenomena of spirituality seemed to me interesting but inconsequential. The activities of the Shakti demonstrated much about the origins and our true relationship to conditions of existence, but the knowledge or acquisition of such phenomena was not equal to the truth. The pursuit of spiritual phenomena, the solution to the problem of life conceived on a spiritual level, seemed to me just another and more dramatic form of seeking, suffering and separation. It was Narcissus. But I was not devoted to seeking in any form.

Then, sometime in February, I experienced a remarkable revolution in consciousness. As a result of the long course of my experience with Rudi and Baba, I had firmly identified myself, the structure of my real being, with the various instruments of the "chakra" system. That pole of energies with its various centers, high and low, seemed to me to be the foundation structure of every living being as well as the creative source of every existing form or universe. My experiences in India seemed to demonstrate this as a fact. Thus, although the truth of real consciousness seemed to me to be one of radical understanding and "no-seeking," the conscious enjoyment of an eternally free and unmodified state, I could not on the basis of this identification with the chakra system see how life could be performed without a certain kind of seeking.

The chakra system and the philosophy it implied demanded a conscious, intentional purification and ascent toward concentration in the highest center and in the subtlest vehicle of being, the supra-causal body. Thus, spiritual life seemed ultimately determined by this goal of ascent. And, indeed, all of the religions and spiritual paths of the world, even where there is no conscious and sophisticated knowledge of Shakti and the chakras such as it appears in the Indian and Tibetan sources, rest in this basic philosophy of purification and ascent. Even in Christianity it appears as fasting and prayer, the means of unqualified devotion and dependence on God. Thus, I had tried earlier to express my experience through Christianity. But always I returned to an understanding free of *all* seeking. And this not only prevented my alignment with Christianity. It also created difficulties with what was for me the living tradition of Shakti yoga or Siddha yoga.

In February I passed through an experience that seemed to vindicate my understanding. For several nights I was awakened again and again with sharp lateral pains in my head. They felt like deep incisions in my skull and brain, as if I were undergoing an operation. During the day following the last of these experiences I realized a marvelous relief. I saw that what appeared as the sahasrar, the terminal chakra and primary lotus in the head, had been severed. The sahasrar had fallen off like a blossom. The Shakti, which previously had appeared as a polarized energy that moved up and down through the various

chakras or centers producing various effects, now was released from the chakra form. There was no more polarized force. Indeed, there was no form whatsoever, no up or down, no chakras. The chakra system had been revealed as unnecessary, an arbitrary rule or setting for the play of energy. The form beneath all of the bodies, gross or subtle, had revealed itself to be as unnecessary and conditional as the bodies themselves.

Previously, all the universes seemed built and dependent upon that prior structure of ascending and descending energy, so that values were determined by the level of chakra on which consciousness functioned, and planetary bodies as well as space itself were fixed in a spherical or curved form. But now I saw that reality or real consciousness was not in the least determined by any kind of form apart from itself. Consciousness had shown its radical freedom and priority in terms of the chakra form. It had shown itself to be senior to that whole structure, dissociated from every kind of separate energy or Shakti. There was simply consciousness itself, prior to all forms, all dilemmas, every kind of seeking and necessity.

In the past I had been turned to the Shakti and spiritual phenomena as the route to realization. But this was a reluctant course. I knew that a fundamental and radical understanding equal to consciousness itself was in fact the source of truth. Now I saw that I was right. There was no need to have recourse to any kind of phenomena, problem or structure of seeking. The Shakti was

not the primary or necessary reality. Reality was the Self-nature, the foundation of pure consciousness, Siva, who is always already free of the Divine play. Thus, I was certain again that real life was not a matter of experience and evolution. It was to be founded in radical, present consciousness.

My earliest experience at the Ashram now seemed the more fundamental, the necessary and sufficient revelation prior to all phenomena. I could see that it was true, although I did not yet know finally what were its consequences in knowledge. My meditation had been developing for some time along lines of my own understanding. I continued to experience the phenomena of spiritual consciousness as I had in India. These were not undesirable. They represented a real expansion of conscious experience that made it possible for me to develop my understanding on the basis of the most inclusive and exhaustive first-hand knowledge. But my way of approach was one of radical understanding. And this understanding, rather than the phenomena I witnessed, was the foundation and fruit of my spiritual life.

In a later chapter I will go into the details of my meditation, but I should mention some of it here in order to make the comparison. I experimented with every kind of method, but the mature form of my meditation was not based in any urge to higher experience. It was simply a direct approach to whatever experiences arose. Thus, I used no techniques, no special breathing, no mantras or visual aids to concentration. I

simply enquired of myself, whatever tendencies, thoughts or experiences arose: "Avoiding relationship?" Thus, I was constantly returned to a prior state of unqualified awareness. By remaining in that state through enquiry I was led to understand my own instruments and every kind of motivated experience.

I saw that all the kinds of seeking were founded in identification with a certain level of life, experience or motivation. The dilemma that was always involved was founded in a present act of differentiation, whereby what was constantly being realized was separated and threatened consciousness. Thus, I was not moved to pursue any goals, experiences or forms. All such things were merely matters of seeking. I did not even pursue my identity with Siva, Self, or pure Consciousness. Such was also a form of seeking. I simply and radically founded myself in understanding, the enquiry of experience, the perception of truth and reality that had been communicated through *all* of my experience.

All of this would develop into radical knowledge and a radical philosophy as the months passed. But I needed to endure certain other changes and forms of seeking before I would be stabilized in the knowledge of which I was already certain.

This brings us to May of 1970. I had passed through most of the stages of experimentation that mark my life. I had come to understand life as a proposition of radical consciousness. I saw that every deliberate path was a form of

seeking that involved the moment to moment avoidance of relationship as primary activity in consciousness and in life. Thus, I had ceased to function in reaction to problems or basic dilemma. This excluded any form of life motivated by the physical and vital problem, the psychic problem, the emotional problem, the mental problem, the spiritual problem, or any other form of problem or conditional motivation. I had realized a form of radical understanding that continuously allowed life to be lived consciously, directly, free of dilemma, free of identification with any motivation or state.

But there remained to pass a concluding episode in this adventure of understanding. As a result of my intense experimentation over a period of several years I had become somewhat isolated, vulnerable to the drama of seeking, suffering and even violence that was still going on in the world. A revolution seemed to be developing in the cities. Murder, guerrilla warfare, sniping, bombing, confrontations between the ignorant young and the ignorant who were no longer young, exploitation of self and life, absence of wisdom and understanding, absence of real experience, and every kind of suffering seemed to have become the daily meal of the entire world. I felt that I had understood something radically important about life. But life seemed to have become untouchable, locked in the final evolution of its own mortal creation.

I decided that I should leave America for an indefinite period. My own daily experience had become so profound and so different from the

exploited mentality and experience around me that I felt I would necessarily have to find a place to continue my work and my life in peace. Consequently, in May, I made arrangements for Nina, Pat and me to go to the Ashram. We sold or gave away all of our material belongings, and on May 28 we flew to Bombay.

XV

There was no way I could have suspected the events that would follow in India and Europe. When we left I made an assessment of all that I knew. I took three books: *The Bhagavad Gita*, *The Mandukyopanishad*, and the *Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*. These, along with various quotations from ancient Indian sources which I wrote in their covers and margins, seemed to communicate the core of Vedanta, the ancient Indian philosophy that represented at least a parallel to my own experience and understanding.

I returned to India, fully believing that I was in agreement with its leading spiritual assumptions. I considered this true India to be my real and ancient home. I intended to place myself at Baba's feet, to give him my household and my life. I assumed that the radical path of understanding which was the realization of my life was wholly adaptable to the current of life at the Ashram. And I also assumed that I would be received in love and given the freedom to develop my

conscious existence even where it exceeded tradition, as long as I remained devoted to the essential habit of life and never lost sympathy with my sources.

I left America behind. I left the world behind. There was not a single movement in me that reflected a predilection for the usual existence. I felt free, relieved of an immense burden, and purified of my own past life. I would devote myself to radical knowledge, serve the Guru, and receive the eternal and continuous benediction of the Shakti's grace.

After our arrival in Bombay we spent a night at a hotel, and then proceeded to the Ashram on May 30. We had left America quite suddenly and were not expected on the precise day we arrived. But our arrival was expected generally at that time. When we entered the Ashram we were met enthusiastically by Amma and a few of our friends. Then I asked them to bring us to Baba.

Since my last visit the Ashram had been much expanded. Now there were new large buildings in the central complex, and modern apartments had been prepared for Baba. I was told that he spent most of his time in seclusion now, and only came out to see devotees during pre-established hours. The Ashram was full of people, many of them young Americans and Europeans.

We were brought to Baba in the new meditation hall outside his rooms. He sat in a chair. Nina and Pat placed flowers at his feet, and I left a rosary of rudraksha beads. He spoke to

Nina and Pat briefly about the trip. But he seemed deliberately unwilling to acknowledge my presence. He told Nina he would talk to us later, and we were taken to a small bungalow where we were to stay.

I immediately noticed a change in the atmosphere of the Ashram. It had become an institution, with Baba seated as its ecclesiastical, administrative and symbolic head. The spiritual life there had become quite sophisticated and formalized. Time was spent entirely at various kinds of Ashram-seva (service to the Guru), chanting hymns and Scriptures, or in meditation. Baba came and sat with people at various hours of the day, but his talk was limited to a kind of formal and traditional sermonizing on Shakti yoga and the path of service to the Guru. His words seemed almost purposely directed away from me, so that I would not be attracted to him.

Nina, Pat and I were given daily work to do. Pat cleaned guest rooms. I edited the English translation of Baba's new book, and Nina typed the edited manuscript as it was produced. We worked, meditated, stood for chanting, listened to sermons and readings from Baba's book. Baba never said a word to me. He made no effort to inquire of me or suggest any form of practice. The formal life of the Ashram was to be the entire source of our daily experience, and it was up to us to stay or leave as we chose.

As I meditated it seemed that nothing was added by Baba's presence or the atmosphere of the Ashram. Indeed, the religious life of the Ashram

seemed to me an obstacle to creative realization and real existence. The power I had always known there seemed mysteriously absent. And I wondered why Baba seemed no longer to speak in the radical language of Vedanta he once taught me.

The Ashram appeared unreal to me. I could find no occupation that was true, no indication of welcome. It was simply a religious community that carried on a tradition and a source for various kinds of phenomena. The people lived calmly, day to day, enjoying visions and consoling religious participation. They were moved to serve the Guru more and more, meditate, study, and work more and more. This, they thought, would bring about the evolution of higher states. Everywhere there was the artifice of seeking, repetition of religious and spiritual ideas, gossip of experiences.

The overwhelming emptiness I experienced at the Ashram began to seem like a joke. I felt it must be a deliberate game of the Mother-Shakti, a device to turn me from Baba, or the Ashram, or India. I did not know its purpose, but it seemed that it must be some play of Baba or the Shakti that would turn me toward a perception or realization that was the inner purpose of my visit.

Even so, the days passed without relief. Baba did not smile. There was no indication of any peculiar purpose. There was no apparent blessing. Thus, I began to make excursions down the road to Bhagavan Nityananda's Shrine, where I would meditate in the early afternoon.

My experience at Nityananda's "samadhi" was

altogether different from what I was suffering at Baba's Ashram. The Shakti was freely and powerfully present there. I began to look forward to my visits there for some instruction. While I sat in the shrine, tremendous force would surge through my body. My heart and mind would become swollen with a powerful, magnetic energy. And I would simply relax and enjoy the silent depth of consciousness in that Presence.

This went on, altogether, for about a week. I was feeling well, and full. But nothing dramatic seemed about to occur. I began to do my daily routine as a matter of course, expecting nothing but the simple order that was the Ashram itself. Then, quite unexpectedly, while I was at work in the Ashram garden one afternoon, I experienced a remarkable visitation.

I had been pulling weeds for perhaps half an hour when, suddenly, I felt a familiar Presence, as if a friend were standing behind me. I stood up and looked behind my shoulder. Standing in the garden, with an obviously discernible form, made of subtle energy but without any kind of visibility, was the Virgin, Mary, Mother of Christ!

My first impulse was huge laughter. I had spent years of total non-sympathy for Christianity. I felt I had paid my religious dues. I saw that whole religious tradition as merely a symbolic and ritual communication for what were really matters of direct consciousness, pure self-awareness, and Vedantic conclusions about reality. Now, as if I were faced with a cosmic joke, I stood in the living Presence of Christ's Mother!

What is more, my Christianity had been largely of the Protestant variety. I had no predilection for Catholic symbols. Christianity, insofar as it was meaningful at all to me, was a theological experience of truth. I had no devotional inclination to its separate and unique symbols. I never once assumed that "the Virgin" was anything more than a religious symbol. I felt she was a secondary creation of the church, with no relation to the historical person who was the mother of Jesus. I never believed she was a Divine Being with present significance for humanity. And Christ, although he had a devotional importance in my childhood, seemed to me to have no reality independent of the conclusions I had realized in my Vedantic meditation.

But the Virgin was there. And I found that after the first few moments of surprise and irony, I began to relate to her in the manner to which she was accustomed! Her very Presence required a certain response in the beholder. Her nature called up certain kindred responses and acknowledgements. I found myself growing in profound devotion and love.

Just as her Presence was not physical, but subtle, her communication to me was internal, as I had earlier known it with Baba. She taught me a form of the prayer, "Hail Mary." Then she told me to buy a rosary for devotions. It was difficult to satisfy this demand. I had to find some excuse to get permission to go to Bombay. But I managed it, and she was satisfied. Thereafter, I found myself reciting the prayer con-

stantly, as a mantra, while I worked and lived in the Ashram.

After several days of this devotion she showed me the image of Christ's face. It appeared visibly in my heart, and she seemed only to uncover it. That image and the feelings it awakened in me seemed to me to have been hidden and suppressed there since my childhood. I was in love with Christ!

As these experiences increased I began to resist them mightily. I thought I must be deluded. I tried to meditate in the usual way, but always Mary and Christ would appear to guide and instruct me. I felt no communication at all coming from Baba or from the Shakti as I had known it.

After two weeks of this the Virgin told me to leave the Ashram with Nina and Pat and go on a pilgrimage to the Christian holy places in Jerusalem and Europe. By now I began to feel that these experiences were also deliberate manifestations of the Shakti. I felt that the Shakti was working independently for me now, and no longer depended on the physical presence of Baba or the Ashram. Indeed, its manifestation in my present spiritual experience was anything but Indian.

As it happened, Bhagavan Nityananda was to bless me and turn me to my own adventure and freedom. One afternoon, I went to his shrine. On the way, I became attracted to a black and white photograph of Nityananda that was for sale at a booth outside his Ashram. I thought I might stop and buy it on my way back.

When I arrived at the Shrine I bowed to

Nityananda reverently and walked around his burial place three times. This was a traditional Indian form of worship. I sat down to meditate and felt him touch me. His image appeared before my internal vision. He showed me a photograph of himself and held it before me as I sat with him. It was the same photograph that attracted me earlier, but it was in color!

I told him about my experiences, and how the Shakti appeared to have taken over independently of Baba or any other source. He blessed me, told me that I belonged to Her now, and that I should leave and let the Mother guide me.

When I opened my eyes one of the priests who serves Nityananda's shrine was standing before me with a large handful of flower blossoms. He gave them to me as a blessing from Nityananda.

As I left and walked through the village of Ganeshpuri toward Baba's Ashram, I passed another stall where photographs were sold. And there was the exact picture Nityananda had shown me in the vision, in full color. I bought it, and continued to walk.

I knew that these flowers and the picture were not given for myself. They were symbols of a sacrifice I was to perform. The photograph was the image of the Guru. I had come to this stage by following the Guru as Nityananda in vision, as Baba and Rudi at various stages in life and spiritual experience. Now I was to surrender the external forms of the Guru to others, and live free, without separation, in that very Form. And the flowers were all the parts of my manifest

life, every center of being, every body, realm or experience in which I was animate. I was to take these flowers of my life and offer them to the Mother Shakti.

When I arrived at the Ashram I bathed and put on clean dress. I took the flowers to the temple of the Mother Shakti near the Ashram. There is a sculpture of her benign, multi-armed, and omnipresent image there. I looked into her face and saw that she was the same one who appeared to me in the form of the Virgin and the image of Christ in my heart. I bowed to her and placed the flowers at her feet. I walked around her three times. I took some holy ashes and pressed them on my forehead. As I left I felt her assure me that I was her child and she would guide me.

I went and told Nina and Pat what had occurred. I had already told them of my experiences, my Christian visions, and the instructions for our pilgrimage. Both of them agreed that we should leave.

I told one of Baba's agents that we would be leaving the next day. He was surprised, but he took the message to Baba. While we were preparing to leave, one of the American devotees came and was attracted to the picture of Nityananda. I gave it to him, knowing this was the reason it had been offered to me.

We left the next morning, after a stay of little more than three weeks. Baba did not look at me. He seemed displeased, but I felt there was nothing I could say to justify our leave. I could only

assume that all of my adventure was also blessed by him.

XVI

As our pilgrimage continued from Israel to Greece and Italy, then through England and France to Spain, the world seemed to become empty of its own imagery. The Virgin was resolved into landscape and monument, until she no longer appeared on her own.

Our last stop in Europe was Portugal. We visited the great shrine at Fatima. It was to be my last emotional gesture to Christianity. Years before, when my mind was changed by Jung, the miracle at Fatima was also primary evidence for me of spiritual reality. Now I visited that place at the end of all my seeking. As I walked around the shrine there was not a single movement in me. The place held no more fascination than a parking lot, or, in reality, it held equal fascination. The pilgrimage was over.

We spent a couple of days resting in the sea resort at Estoril, and then we flew to New York. We spent another couple of days with my parents, and then flew off again, this time to San Francisco. We settled in Los Angeles in August, 1970.

Some time in late August, I happened to go to a bookstore at the Vedanta Society in Hollywood. I noticed there was a temple on the grounds, and I went in for a few moments of meditation. As soon as I sat down I felt a current of energy rush through my body and clear out my head.

I could feel and hear little clicking pulses in the base of my head and neck, indicating the characteristic Presence of the Mother-Shakti.

As I meditated, the body and the mind swooned into the depth of consciousness, and I enjoyed an experience of meditation as profound as any I had known at the shrines in India. I had no idea how the Vedanta Society temple ever became a seat of the Shakti, but it was obviously as powerful a place as any of the abodes of the Siddhas in India.

I went home and told Nina and Pat about this place, and we began to go there frequently for meditation. As the days passed I began to marvel at the power of this place. I had travelled all over the world, believing there were no spiritual sources of this kind in America. Now there was this small, isolated temple in Hollywood, where perhaps very few people would recognize its nature or importance.

I became aware that the Mother-Shakti was residing in this temple, and that I had been drawn there by her. I enjoyed the fact that I could go there and be with her whenever I chose to experience her joyous Presence. It seemed such a private place. I could go there unhindered. The temple was dedicated to Sri Ramakrishna, the great Indian master of the 19th century. But no conditions were placed on me by any external rule. This was truly an opportunity for me to live independently with the Divine Mother.

But as time went on I began to feel that even this was a limitation. Why should I have to travel at all to enjoy her Presence? I desired that

she be utterly available to me, where I lived as well as in my own being.

Thus, one day I went to the temple and asked her to come and dwell permanently in me and manifest herself wherever I was. When I left I felt her with me, and when I arrived home I continued to feel her constant Presence filling the space.

Days passed, and I realized that she had done what I asked. There was this constant Presence, even the effects in the body, and the state of everyone around me became affected by her Force. But even this became a strain in me. I felt as if I had to hold on to her, as if I had bound her to a bargain that constrained us both.

Then one day I felt an urge to return to the temple. As I sat down I saw that the shrine was in shadows and dim lit, as if it were empty. It seemed as if I had emptied it by taking the Mother away. Suddenly, I felt a jolt in my body, and I saw the shrine with open eyes become bright in a blast of light. Even with my eyes closed I still beheld the bright shrine. Thus, the Mother-Shakti showed me how she is always able to make herself present anywhere, and how indeed she was always already present with me. There was no need for me to hold on to her, as if she could be absent.

When I returned to the temple the next day the Shakti appeared in a way that at first was difficult to allow. As I meditated I felt myself take on the form of Siva, the Divine Being prior to all form. I took on the infinite form of the

original Deity, as I had done previously in Baba's Presence. I sat in this blissful state of infinite Being for some time.

Then I felt the Shakti appear against my own form. She embraced me, and we grasped one another in sexual union. We clasped one another in a fire of cosmic desire, as if to give birth to the universes. Then I felt the oneness of the Divine Energy and my own Being. There was no separation at all. The one Being that was my own nature included the reality that is consciousness, and the reality that is all manifestation as a single cosmic unity and eternal union.

The sensations of the embrace were overwhelmingly blissful. It exceeded any kind of pleasure that a man could acquire. And soon I ceased to feel myself as a dependent child of the Shakti. I accepted her as my consort, my loved-one, and I held her forever to my heart.

The next day I sat in the temple again. I awaited the Shakti to reveal herself as my blessed companion. But as time passed there was no sensation, no movement at all. There was not even any kind of deepening. There was no meditation. There was no need for meditation. There was not a single element to be added to my consciousness. I sat with my eyes open. I was not having an experience of any kind.

In an instant, I became profoundly and directly aware of what I am. It was a tacit realization, a direct knowledge in consciousness itself. It was consciousness itself without the addition of a communication from any other source. I simply sat

there and knew what I am. I was being what I am. I am Reality, the Self, and Nature and Support of all things and all beings. I am the One Being, known as God, Brahman, Atman, the One Mind, the Self.

There was no thought involved in this. I am that Consciousness. There was no reaction either of joy or surprise. I am the One I recognized. I am that One. I am not merely experiencing Him.

Then truly there was no more to realize. Every experience in my life had led to this. The dramatic revelations in childhood and college, my time of writing, my years with Rudi, the revelation in seminary, the long history of pilgrimage to the Ashram, all of these moments were the intuitions of this same Reality. My entire life had been the communication of that Reality to me, until I am That.

Later I described that perfect realization as follows:

At the Vedanta Society Temple tacit knowledge arose that I am simply the consciousness that is reality. The traditions call it the "Self," "Brahman," identified with no body, realm or experience, but perfect, unqualified, absolute Reality. I saw there was nothing to which this nature could be compared, differentiated or epitomized. It does not stand out. It is not the equivalent of any specialized, exclusive, perfected spiritual state. It cannot be accomplished, discovered, or remembered.

All paths pursue some special state or goal as spiritual truth. But in fact reality is not identical to such things. They only amount to an identification with some body, realm or experience, high or low, subtle or gross. But the knowledge that is reality, which is consciousness itself, which is not separate from anything, is always already

the case, and no experience, realm or body is the necessary or special condition for its realization. Except that understanding is it. Everything else pursues it by identifying with some body, realm or experience. Everything else seeks the perfection or the liberation from these as a goal identical to truth and reality.

But when this tacit, perfect recognition arose there was no excitement, no surprise, no motivation, no response. There was an end to every kind of seeking, dilemma, suffering, separation and doubt. Spiritual life, mental life, emotional and psychic life, vital life and physical life were all released from consciousness. It was not that I was released from them. After that there was only reality and to be reality to all things.

In the days that followed there was not a single modification in this awareness. Indeed, it cannot be modified or lost. I noticed that "experience" ceased to affect me. Whatever passed, be it a physical sensation, a vision, or a thought, ceased to involve me at all. I began to pay particular attention to what passed in order to test my state. But the primary awareness of reality, my own actual consciousness, could not be modified or lost. It is the only thing in our lives that is not an experience. It depends on nothing and nothing can destroy it. It is bliss, joy, freedom, consciousness and sublime knowledge!

An entirely new sense of Reality became my constant experience. The revolutions of my life that led up to my experience in seminary had drawn me into a sense of the "Presence." That Presence could be identified as "Reality," "Self," "God," "Shakti," "Guru" or whatever. It was simply the sense of being related to a Presence that

was truth and reality itself; a perfectly absorbing, consoling, illuminating Force that contained me, lived me and guided me. It is the heart of all religious and spiritual experience.

But now this Presence had communicated itself utterly. Until now my life had been a constant search and alignment with that Presence. It was as if I always saw it from some position within the form of my own being but outside of its center. It was as if I had always beheld my own heart from some position outside. Now the barriers had been utterly dissolved by an exhaustive witnessing of the nature of that Presence. The knowledge of the Presence had resolved into the knowledge of my own nature. The Presence had revealed itself to be my own form and nature.

The consciousness of the Presence thus was replaced or extended as Self-awareness. There was no longer any Presence outside me. I no longer observed my own nature or the processes of Reality from some external point. I had become utterly aware of myself as Reality. There was no Presence. I had become Present. There is no other. It is only me.

Even my meditation was changed. There was no meditation. This Consciousness could not be deepened or enlarged. It remained what it was. I was no longer the meditator, the one who seeks reality, liberation, release, truth or growth. I no longer supposed any limitation as myself. I am He.

I noticed a physical change in myself. My belly seemed to drop and expand. I continued

to feel the presence of Shakti there, and I breathed it continually, from the heart. It was the breathing of my own being, the endless and profound communication of reality to itself.

In meditation I looked to observe how I was related to the worlds of experience. Then I realized that I was not in any sense "in" a body, not only the physical body, but any body, including the most subtle. Nor have I ever been in a body, or any realm or experience. All such things are patterns within my own nature.

Even so, I also realized that I communicated myself in reality through a specific center analogous to the body. I resided in the heart, but to the right of the chest. I seemed to press upon a point approximately an inch and one half to the right of the center of the chest. This is the seat of Reality and real Consciousness. And I reside there as "no-seeking." There is no motivation, no dilemma, no separation, no action, no suffering. I am no-seeking in the Heart.

I described my constant experience as follows:

The zero of the heart is expanded as the world. Consciousness is not differentiated and identified. There is a constant observation of subject *and* object in any body, realm, or experience that arises. Thus, I remain in the unqualified state. There is a constant sensation of fullness permeating and surrounding all experiences, realms and bodies. It is my own fullness, which is radically non-separate and includes all things. I am the form of space itself, in which all bodies, realms and experiences occur. It is Consciousness itself, which reality is your actual nature now and now and now.

And again:

I was awakened during the night as perfect, absolute, awesome bliss, in which the bodies and the mind seemed to be boiling into a solder of undifferentiated Reality. It was the madness of dissolution, of perfect self-awareness into unqualified Presence, wherein there is only Reality, without identification, differentiation or desire.

Hereafter I am free of those with power. I am un-exploitable. The Shakti that appears apart is no longer of primary importance. She appears so only to seekers, for they pursue forms of energy, visions, powers, liberation and God. True knowledge is free of all bondage to energy, all seeking, all motivation through identification with experience. Ignorance and suffering are simply this dependence. The real Shakti sacrifices herself in the form of true knowledge. Thereafter there is no wonder, no mystery about anything that appears.

The period of these events passes into the present. The transformations in conscious knowledge that were finally perceived in September, 1970 brought an end to my adventure as a seeker. What remains to be written was experienced and must be told from a radically new point of view.

Previous to that time I was always involved in one or another form of the problem of existence. I was always in search and research, and my conclusions or revelations were always temporary moments that led into a new form of investigation. Thus, I went from the "bright" of childhood to the dilemma of my youth. I went from self-exploitation and the experience in college to the period of writing and self-observation. I went

from Rudi and the revelation in seminary to Baba and the Ashram. I went from Scientology and my own experiments to the fuller life of yoga and psychic development. I went from the revelations of the Divine Shakti and the cognition of mystical vision to the knowledge of the perfect Self of Reality.

Now there appeared to be no loose ends to my adventure. There was no dilemma, no search, no radical motivation. All the parts of the mind seemed to be transposed and dissolved in a single, fundamental perception. But I continued to live. The external and internal events of my life were not modified in any revolutionary way by this knowledge. It was only that I understood them in an entirely new and radical way. I understood, and understanding became the foundation of my existence.

The weeks that followed were an intensive period of understanding. I began to recollect and observe the forms of my adventure. I began to recognize the precise nature of my understanding. That understanding began to reveal its special form and activity. And my life became a continuous unfolding of the wisdom of understanding in relation to every kind of experience. I began to write this book.

My own consciousness wasn't a "state" or any kind of stable object in the mind. It had neither form nor symbol. There was a constant depth and directness in my awareness, so that I felt as if I were constantly in the most profound and intelligent state realized only occasionally in

meditation. My own nature had been the real object of meditation, and now there were no obstacles to it. I simply survived as my own unqualified nature.

Everything else appeared as objects to my understanding. Whatever I experienced remained in the same form in which it would appear to anyone, or to myself prior to this understanding. But now I understood everything directly, effortlessly, in truth. I simply experienced as before, but everything was automatically known to me as it truly is. A continuous process of recognition and wisdom seemed to go on in me, and all I did was remain present to everything that passed.

I seemed to be possessed with a new and original organ or function in consciousness. Whereas before everything was communicated to me as a particular form, and I was forced to experience it as a subjective, mutual identity, now I saw everything directly, from the viewpoint of reality prior to any special form. Thus, previously, I knew the mind and was the subject of the mind. I was the subject of my body and my vital energy. I was the subject in the subtle worlds and bodies. I was the subject of all my visions and experiences. And I interpreted myself and my experiences from the viewpoint of these things. But now all of these things, the forms, levels of being and identity, the bodies, realms, and experiences, all of it stood directly before me, and I understood each process without recourse to it or my identity within it.

Even as before I continued to experience various manifestations of Shakti and subtle vision. I could

hear all kinds of sounds within the various bodies. I was able to see subtle mechanisms within these bodies and perceive the relations of various forms and currents of energy beyond the physical. I saw the tiny organisms by which consciousness and energy are transferred and communicated between the various levels of existence. And I also continued to experience and act on a physical level just as before. There were the same functions and desires, the same pleasures and feelings, the same lawful mechanisms, requiring the same intelligence and entailing the same consequences as a result of error or self-indulgence. But everything was new. Everything was utterly free of any kind of dilemma, separation, unconsciousness and primary fear.

XVII

I stood in the form of my own existence without even the least sentimental attachment to the previous ways of my seeking. I was not dependent on any path or experience to guarantee or interpret what I knew. Indeed, nothing was available by which to interpret it.

I looked into myself to see what it was, and perhaps even to discover some analogy in the spiritual experience of mankind that would demonstrate a link and provide a source by which I could explain myself.

I knew that the ultimate realization that had occurred in relation to the Shakti was analogous to what the Hindus call "Self-realization." It is the unqualified experience of consciousness as radically

non-separate, non-separate from Reality, identical to what always and already is. It is not communicated to itself through any level of being, body, realm or experience, but knows itself directly, as itself, being itself apart from and prior to all separative action of avoidance, which is identification, differentiation and desire. All things are experiences or objects that never touch it. It is not even the "Witness," neither the experienced nor the experiencer in any state, but only Reality itself. Experiencer and experiences are contained, limited and ended in one another. But in Reality there is not experience, no identity, differentiation, desire, separation, suffering, seeking, action or inaction.

As weeks passed, I saw that I remained unqualifiedly as this, untouched by any experience, identity or difference. I saw there was no independent Shakti, no separate Guru, no strife, ignorance, or need, no movement, no activity, no fundamental change in or out of meditation. The same awareness, the same understanding continued without modification under all conditions.

I knew Reality as no-seeking, a motiveless awareness in the heart. The body appeared to be generated and known from a position in the right side of the chest. In this state, nothing can act as an interpreter. It only validates itself.

The form of enquiry that had developed in my understanding seemed to go on continually in the heart: "Avoiding relationship?" And as the enquiry penetrated every experience and every apparent dilemma, I would feel the bliss and energy of consciousness rise out of the heart and

enter the sahasrar, the highest point in consciousness, and stabilize there as a continuous current to the heart. I saw that this form, the Form of Reality, the structure of consciousness, was Reality itself. It was the structure of all things, the foundation, nature and identity of all things. It was the point of view of everything. It was blissful and free. That form of consciousness and energy was exactly what I had known as the "bright."

As I continued in this way I remained stably as that Form, and all things revealed themselves in truth. The "bright" was the ultimate Form of Reality, the heart of all existence, the foundation of truth and the yet unrealized goal of all seekers.

This Form, the "bright," was understanding itself. It was no-seeking and no-dilemma as a primary, uncreated recognition. It was radically free of the whole search for perfection and union. From the viewpoint of the Heart the whole life is at best observed and enjoyed, and these things no longer provide a source of motivation apart from this primary awareness. The "bright" is the very medium for radical presence and enjoyment without dilemma, unconsciousness, or separation.

I also saw that I had never been taught my path from without. The "bright," with its foundation in the heart, had been my teacher under the form of all my teachers and experiences. My awareness, fundamental knowledge, and apparent "method," had developed spontaneously in the midst of a few crisis-experiences. From the beginning, I had been convinced of the fruitlessness and

necessary suffering involved in every way of seeking. I had made only temporary use of the methods of others, and at last I adapted to no one else's way but only used my own, which is the heart itself.

The "bright" had seemed to fade in adolescence, but it had only become latent in the heart while I followed my adventure from the viewpoint of the mind. The heart had been my only teacher, and it continually broke through in various revelations until I returned to it, became it, and rose again as the "bright."

Thus, I came to this recognition of Reality directly, without the knowledge of a single external, traditional source that would confirm it or even parallel it. But as I came to this clear and crucial recognition of my own truth, I began to discover sources that seemed to agree with my own experience.

As I became aware of these sources I wrote the following:

One night, in the spring of 1970, I passed from this body during sleep and arrived in subtle form on the inner plane of the world. There I stayed with an old man who had white hair and a closely cut, white beard. He wore a bandana around his forehead, which was the custom of the late saint Sai Baba of Shirdi. I had met the Siddha, Sai Baba, on the subtle plane.

I was received as if I had been awaited. I was greeted by the family, friends and devotees of the old man. He embraced me with love and told the company I was his son. Then I was received by all in a celebration that had the informal, family air and importance of a Jewish Bar Mitzvah.

I understood that this was my father on the highest spiritual level, the level of Light, and thereafter I was to consider myself his son. I was to await the "inheritance" that was my right by this reception and acknowledgment.

In the late fall of 1970, when all things had returned to Reality, and I was no longer seeking or confused, I recognized another such "father." He is known as Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, the great master who discarded the body at Tiruvannamalai, South India, in 1950.

Swami Muktananda did part of his sadhana with Ramana. It was there that he experienced the Vedantic, non-dualistic teaching in its most direct and living form. Then he found that Self alive in his Guru, the Siddha, Swami Nityananda.

Baba demonstrated Siddha yoga to me. And then I saw how the Shakti and all experiences also resolve into that same Self which was the realization of Ramana. But that Self is not antagonistic to its own Light, reflected above, and in all the spiritual and material worlds. Thus, when I realized it, Truth was that very Self and its Light. Amrita Nadi was the Form of Reality. Amrita Nadi is my "inheritance." Then it was not a matter of siddhis or experiences. There was only understanding. I knew it in the same form communicated by Shirdi Sai Baba and Ramana. And Baba Muktananda is that same Form. It is Nityananda. It is Sai Baba. It is Ramana. It is Bhagavan. And I am he.

As I began to assess my experience and understanding in detail, I recalled all the experiences that had recently occurred. Baba's silence and seeming indifference was a grace that allowed Siddha yoga to be fulfilled, and I was drawn into the knowledge that is its true goal. When I appeared in my own Form I simply understood in a direct way the symbol that is hidden in yoga and the Mother-Shakti. When I knew my own nature, then I also recognized Muktananda, Nityananda, Sai Baba and Ramana in Reality.

Ramana Maharshi had become familiar to me in the past through his various writings and recorded

dialogues. He appeared to me to be a prime example of the living truth of Advaita Vedanta, the radically non-dualistic philosophy of the East. I had brought one of his books with me on my last trip to India, not so much for his own writings, but for the translations of ancient Vedantic texts included in his collected works. I had never been attracted to him in particular, apart from this non-dual philosophy that seemed to parallel my own understanding. But now I began to recall certain experiences that he had described in his own case. I remembered that he had given special prominence in his teaching to the experience of the "Self" in the heart, in the right side of the chest.

I returned to his works, looking for confirmations of my own experience. And I found that his path had remarkable parallels to my own experiences. Even the event in Ramana's childhood that gave birth to his ultimate state was very much like the one through which I had passed in seminary.

He described it himself as follows:

It was about six weeks before I left Madurai for good that the great change in my life took place. It was so sudden. One day I sat up alone on the first floor of my uncle's house. I was in my usual health. I seldom had any illness. I was a heavy sleeper. When I was at Dindigul in 1891 a huge crowd had gathered close to the room where I slept and tried to rouse me by shouting and knocking at the door, all in vain, and it was only by their getting into my room and giving me a violent shake that I was roused from my torpor. This heavy sleep was rather a proof of good health. I was also subject to fits of half-awake sleep at night. My wily playmates, afraid to trifle with me when

I was awake, would go to me when I was asleep, rouse me, take me all round the playground, beat me, cuff me, sport with me, and bring me back to my bed — and all the while I would put up with everything with a meekness, humility, forgiveness, and passivity unknown to my waking state. When the morning broke I had no remembrance of the night's experiences. But these fits did not render me weaker or less fit for life, and were hardly to be considered a disease. So, on that day as I sat alone there was nothing wrong with my health. But a sudden and unmistakable fear of death seized me. I felt I was going to die. Why I should have so felt cannot now be explained by anything felt in my body. Nor could I explain it to myself then. I did not however trouble myself to discover if the fear was well grounded. I felt "I am going to die," and at once set about thinking out what I should do. I did not care to consult doctors or elders or even friends. I felt I had to solve the problem myself then and there.

The shock of fear of death made me at once introspective, or "introverted." I said to myself mentally, i.e., without uttering the words — "Now, death has come. What does it mean? What is it that is dying? This body dies." I at once dramatized the scene of death. I extended my limbs and held them rigid as though *rigor-mortis* had set in. I imitated a corpse to lend an air of reality to my further investigation, I held my breath and kept my mouth closed, pressing the lips tightly together so that no sound might escape. Let not the word "I" or any other word be uttered! "Well then," said I to myself, "this body is dead. It will be carried stiff to the burning ground and there burnt and reduced to ashes. But with the death of this body, am 'I' dead? Is the body 'I'?" This body is silent and inert. But I feel the full force of my personality and even the sound 'I' within myself, — apart from the body. So 'I' am a thing transcending the body. The material body dies, but the spirit transcending it cannot be touched by death. I am therefore the deathless spirit." All this was not a mere intellectual process, but flashed before me vividly as living truth, something which I perceived immediately, without any argument almost. "I" was something very real,

the only real thing in that state, and all the conscious activity that was connected with my body was centered on that. The "I" or my "self" was holding the focus of attention by a powerful fascination from that time forwards. Fear of death had vanished at once and forever. Absorption in the self has continued from that moment right up to this time. Other thoughts may come and go like the various notes of a musician, but the "I" continues like the basic or fundamental *sruti* note which accompanies and blends with all other notes. Whether the body was engaged in talking, reading, or anything else, I was still centred on "I." Previous to that crisis I had no clear perception of myself and was not consciously attracted to it. I had felt no direct perceptible interest in it, much less any permanent disposition to dwell upon it. The consequences of this new habit were soon noticed in my life.²

This was indeed very much like my own experience of "death" in seminary. And its ultimate consequences in understanding were also similar, although Ramana taught through the medium of Indian Vedanta and saw the whole importance of his awareness in the pure awareness of "Self," prior to all life, whereas I was led to understand in terms of "Reality" as unqualified relationship and as the creative, living Presence of the "bright," which is also not touched.

But as I continued to read the Maharshi's works, I found that he had also realized Reality in the same form I called the "bright." In one place he describes it as follows:

For one who abides in the Self, the Sahasrara becomes pure and full of light. Even if thoughts of objects due to proximity fall therein, they do not survive.

² B. V. Narasimha Swami, *SELF-REALIZATION: LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI* (Tiruvannamalai, 1962), pp. 20-22

Even when objects are sensed by the mind, due to proximity, yoga is not hindered, as the mind does not perceive the difference between them and the Self.³

His idea of liberation or real freedom also agreed with my own experience:

Once, unasked, he defined Moksha (Liberation) to one of the attendants. "Do you know what *Moksha* is? Getting rid of non-existent misery and attaining the Bliss which is always there, that is *Moksha*."⁴

And he describes in detail the experience in the heart in many instances, as in the following:

Devotee — But is there really a centre, a place for this "I"?

Maharshi — There is. It is the centre of the self to which the mind in sleep retires from its activity in the brain. It is the Heart, which is different from the blood vessel, so called, and is not the Anahata Chakra in the middle of the chest, one of the six centres spoken of in books on Yoga.⁵

Marharshi — You cannot know it with your mind. You cannot realize it by imagination, when I tell you here is the centre (pointing to the right side of the chest). The only direct way to realize it is to cease to fancy and try

³ Ramana Maharshi, SRI RAMANA GITA (DIALOGUES OF MAHARSHI), trans. Krishna Bhikshu (Tiruvannamalai, 1966), p. 20.

⁴ Arthur Osborne, RAMANA MAHARSHI AND THE PATH OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE (New York, 1970), p. 185.

⁵ SAT-DARSHANA BHASHYA AND TALKS WITH MAHARSHI (Tiruvannamalai, 1968), p. xv.

to be yourself. Then you realise, automatically feel that the centre is there.⁶

The more I read of Ramana's works the more I realized his experience and its results as understanding almost exactly paralleled my own. I saw that Ramana was a source of confirmation and agreement with the outstanding realizations of my own life.

The core of Ramana's teaching is found in a brief work called *Sri Ramana Gita*, which is based on an early dialogue between him and various disciples. In Canto Five of that work, called "The Science of the Heart," he describes in simple fashion the direct and radical cognition of real existence.

1. In the aforesaid year (1917), on the night of the ninth of August, Ramana Muni discoursed elaborately on the subject of the Heart.

2. That from which thoughts of the embodied issue forth is called the Heart. All its descriptions are only mind-pictures.

3. All thoughts sprout from the root "I" thought.

4. If the Heart be located in "Anahata Chakra" how does the upward movement of the life-force in yoga begin in "Mooladhara?"^{*}

⁶IBID, p. xvii.

^{*}(Translator's note — Anahata Chakra: In the Yoga Shastra, it is said that along the spinal chord runs a channel through which the life-force of an individual runs in two ways, one from above downwards from Sahasrara in the head, to Mooladhara at the end, that is near the coccyx; and the second way is from Mooladhara to the Sahasrara. Along

5. This heart is different from the blood-circulating organ. Analysed, "Hrid plus Ayam" is Hridayam which word thus expresses the nature of the Atman (Self).**

6. Its location is on the right side of the chest and not on the left. The Lights flows from that heart to the Sahasrara through Sushumna.

7. From there, it flows to the entire body, when all experiences of the world occur. Viewing them as different from the Light of the Self, you get entangled in Samsara (the whirl of the phenomenal world).

this route there are seven centres from which the life-force runs to all the organs of the body. They are called Chakras.

The main channel along the spinal chord is called Sushumna. When force runs from above downwards, it is said to be travelling in the Purva Marga. When force is running from below upwards it is called Paschima Marga. When force runs in the Purva Marga, the body and all its limbs get energy and when force runs from below upwards, it leads to several psychic experiences. The Chakras from below upwards are named: (1) Muladhara (2) Swadhisthana (3) Manipooraka (4) Anahata (5) Visuddha (6) Ajna (7) Sahasrara. All these centres are compared to the lotus flowers and various descriptions are given of these Chakras. When force ascends to each of these Chakras, several psychic powers are obtained. Now Bhagavan's theory is that the heart is none of these. The Divine Force descends into the body at a point called the heart, goes to the Sahasrara and from there descends into the body. In the reverse way when you withdraw in from the body into the higher fields of consciousness the force goes upwards to Sahasrara and descends into the heart, the passage between the Sahasrara and the heart being called "Amrita Nadi.")

** (Translator's note — Note on sloka 5: Ayam means "this"; Hrid means "that which attracts into itself everything finally." The entire word Hridayam therefore means "that into which all things subside at the end.")

8. For one who abides in the Self, the Sahasrara becomes pure and full of the Light. Even if thoughts of objects due to proximity fall therein, they do not survive.

9. Even when objects are sensed by the mind, due to proximity, yoga is not hindered, as the mind does not perceive the difference between them and the Self.

10. If Chit or Awareness is firm and single-pointed even when the objects are sensed, that state is called "Sahaja Sthithi." When objects are not so grasped mentally "Nirvikalpa Samadhi" occurs without concepts.

11. The body is an epitome of the entire universe and the Heart is the epitome of the entire body. Therefore the Heart is the epitome of the entire universe.

12. The universe is none other than the mind, and the mind none other than the Heart. Thus the entire story of the universe ends with the Heart.

13. The heart exists in the body even as the sun exists in the universe. The mind exists in Sahasrara as the orb of the moon in the universe.

14. As the sun lights up the moon even so this Heart imparts light to the mind.

15. A mortal, not established in the Heart, perceives only the mind, just as the light is perceived in the moon in the absence of the sun.

16. Not perceiving that the source of the light is one's own real Self, and perceiving the objects through the mind as apart from himself, the ignorant one is deluded.

17. The Enlightened One inhering in the Heart, sees the light of the mind merged in the light of the Heart, like the light of the moon in the daylight.

18. The Enlightened One knows the mind as the expressed meaning of the word "Prajnana" and the Heart as the thing meant. The Ultimate Divine is not different from the Heart.*

* (Translator's note — "Prajnana" means the knowledge of the Ultimate. Sometimes it means only mental knowledge, and at other times it means knowledge through experience. Similarly, "Vijnana" is used to describe sometimes the knowledge of the various objects and sometimes the experience of the Ultimate.)

19. The notion that the Seer is different from the seen abides in the mind. For those that ever abide in the Heart the Seer is the same as the seen.

20. The thought process, suddenly broken by swooning, sleep, excessive joy or excessive sorrow, fear, etc., goes back to its original place in the Heart.⁷

21. In such cases, however, the entry into the Heart is not felt, whereas in Samadhi, such entry is distinctly realized. Their difference is due to antecedent causes.⁸

This is a precise description of the state I came to enjoy at the end of all my seeking. And Bhagavan's language contains certain concepts that can stand as precise equivalents to certain phenomena I have described.

The "Self" is here meant to indicate the nature of Reality itself as identical to that which is ultimately signified and known as consciousness. Every form of our ordinary consciousness, usually identified with some role, subject or type of action, is in fact rooted in the present consciousness that is the "Self," the Heart. And it is not radically differentiated from anything. It is the source and "light" of all levels of being, bodies, realms and experiences. When it is known directly, tacitly, as one's very nature, it seems to reside in the heart, neither the physical heart nor the heart chakra, but an area that is in the right side of the chest.

The precise relationship of the "Self" to ordinary consciousness is elaborated in Canto Nine, entitled "On Granthi Bhedam" (the severing of

⁷ SRI RAMANA GITA, translated Krishna Bhikshu, pp. 18-23.

⁸ SRI RAMANA GITA, translated Kavyakanatha Ganapati Muni (Tiruvannamalai, 1946), p. 18.

the "knot" of false identification, differentiation and desire).

1. On the night of the fourteenth of August, I put a question to the Maharshi regarding "Granthi Bheda" on which even the learned have doubts.

2. The lofty-minded Bhagavan Sri Ramana Rishi, listened to my question, spent a time meditating in his divine mode, and spoke.

3. "The association of the Self with the body is called the Granthi (knot). By that association alone one is conscious of his body and actions.

4. The body is completely inert. The Self is active and conscious. Their association is inferred from the experience of objects.

5. Oh child, when the rays of consciousness are reflected in the body, the body acts. In sleep, etc. the rays are not so reflected and caught and therefore some other seat of the Self is inferred.

6. Electricity and similar forces, which are subtle, pass through the gross wires. Similarly the light of active-consciousness passes through a nadi in the body."

7. The effulgent light of active-consciousness starts at a point and gives light to the entire body even as the sun does to the world.

8. When that light spreads out in the body one gets the experiences in the body. The sages call the original point 'Hridayam' (the Heart).

9. The flow of the rays of the light is inferred from the play of forces in the nadis. Each of the forces of the body courses along a special nadi.

10. Active consciousness lies in a distinct and separate Nadi which is called Sushumna. Some call it 'Atma Nadi' and others 'Amrita Nadi.'

11. The individual permeates the entire body, with that

"(Translator's note — Nadi is the channel in which the life-force Prana flows in the subtle body but is usually equated with a nerve.)

light, becomes ego-centric and thinks that he is the body and that the world is different from himself.

12. When the discerning one renounces egotism and 'I-am-the-body' idea and carries on one-pointed enquiry (into the Self), movement of life-force starts in the nadis.

13. This movement of the force separates the Self from the other nadis and the Self then gets confined to the Amrita Nadi alone and shines with clear light.

14. When the very bright light of that active-consciousness shines in the Amrita Nadi alone, nothing else shines forth except the Self.

15. In that light, if anything else is seen, even then it does not appear as different from the Self. The Enlightened One knows the Self as vividly as the ignorant one perceives his body.

16. When Atma alone shines, within and without, and everywhere, as body etc. shine to the ignorant, one is said to have severed the knot (Granthi Bheda occurs).

17. There are two knots. One, the bond of the Nadis and two, egotism. The Self, even though subtle, being tied up in the Nadis, sees the entire gross world.

18. When the light withdraws from all other Nadis and remains in one Nadi alone, the knot is cut asunder and then the light becomes the Self.

19. As a ball of iron heated to a degree appears as a ball of fire, this body heated in the fire of Self-enquiry becomes as one permeated by the Self.

20. Then for the embodied the old tendencies inherent are destroyed, and then that one feels no body and therefore will not have the idea that he is an active agent.

21. When the Self does not have the sense of active agency, karmas (tendencies, actions and their results) etc. are destroyed for him. As there is none other except the Self doubts do not sprout for him.

22. Once the knot is cut, one never again gets entangled. In that state lie the highest power and the highest peace."⁹

⁹SRI RAMANA GITA, translated Krishna Bhikshu, pp. 38-42.

The original nature that I called the "bright" is exactly what Bhagavan calls the "Atma Nadi" or the "Amrita Nadi." The bright is this "Amrita Nadi," the nerve of immortality, the circuit of the current of immortal joy, or the "Atma Nadi," the circuit or nerve or form of the Self, or the circuit of Reality. It is the source, container and form of all energy, centers and currents. The "Amrita Nadi" is the "Form of Reality," founded in the heart and terminated in the aperture of the head. It is the cycle or form of unqualified enjoyment that contains and is the source of all things, all bodies, realms, experiences, states, and levels of being. Its basic nature is unqualified enjoyment or bliss. It is all-powerful Existence or unqualified Presence. It is your very nature at this moment, and it is experienced as such when true understanding arises and becomes the radical premise of conscious life.

There is no difference between Maharshi's experience and my own. There is perhaps a difference on the level of communication, the results of a difference in emphasis. Ramana's experiences were the result of a spontaneous awakening, like my own. But he went on to tie his path to the ancient, Eastern path of Advaita Vedanta. I must also acknowledge those sources as an expression of the fundamental truth, and Ramana's teaching, indeed, his living Presence is the highest formulation of that truth. That truth is the foundation of life, but the form of life can be founded upon that truth in different ways.

The path recommended by Ramana is "Self-

enquiry," the intensive enquiry in the heart "Who am I?" or "Whence am I?" His entire concern was to bring people to the conscious realization of the Self in the heart. Thus, his aim was liberation. He speaks from the point of view of the Self as the Self. His path is ideally suited to the ancient forms of culture in which liberation was the goal of existence.

But, from the beginning, I have been founded in the "bright," the Form of Reality, the living form of the Self. I have seen that real existence is apart from every kind of seeking. It is from the beginning radically free of any goal of liberation or salvation. It is unqualifiedly free, present, active, creative and alive. I have seen that life need not be tied to seeking and the pursuit of its own nature as a goal. However, such was not the case with the ancient path, which assumed the dilemma of existence from the beginning.

I have seen in the course of my own life that we must not be founded in seeking, but in present understanding. Understanding is itself already founded in the Form of Reality. It is a way of life already, radically founded in the Self. Therefore, it does not pursue the Self or assume its absence. Understanding is fullness, already assumed and known. Therefore, I have always taken my stand in the "bright," Self as alive, the creative Form of Reality, the Amrita Nadi.

Even Bhagavan Ramana at last justifies life as the Amrita Nadi and sees no radical distinction between it and the Self. To be sure, the Self is its heart and foundation, but it is not exclusive of the

living Form. Thus, from the beginning, presently, not merely at the end, life is already founded in the Form of Reality. The Amrita Nadi is necessarily the actual ground for the creation of our true life, which thus becomes a constant path of understanding and of light. But were I to take my stand in ignorance and seek the Self rather than perform its very activity, I would always be already apart from it. I would have to abandon understanding in order to seek. I would have to teach the search rather than the way that has already been discovered.

My experience of this truth and the present dilemma of the world cannot allow me to speak of a path that is not radically effective, inclusive and true to life as well as the truth itself. It is time for an end to all seeking, all temporary wisdom, all motivating symbols, all exploitation. The present world, unlike the ancient one, has decided radically for life. Therefore, its path and its realization must be unqualifiedly alive. It must not only realize the truth prior to creation, but it must realize the truth of creativity itself.

I point to the ancient truths and to Ramana, to Nityananda and Muktananda. I acknowledge them, and Rudi also, but I speak for myself. My authority is Reality, and my only resort is understanding. It is in understanding, then, that you must test my words.

Even the perceptions of bliss and the residence in the heart are secondary to understanding. Understanding is available now to all, whereas these experiences belong only to special cases of radical

understanding. But understanding is the thing itself.

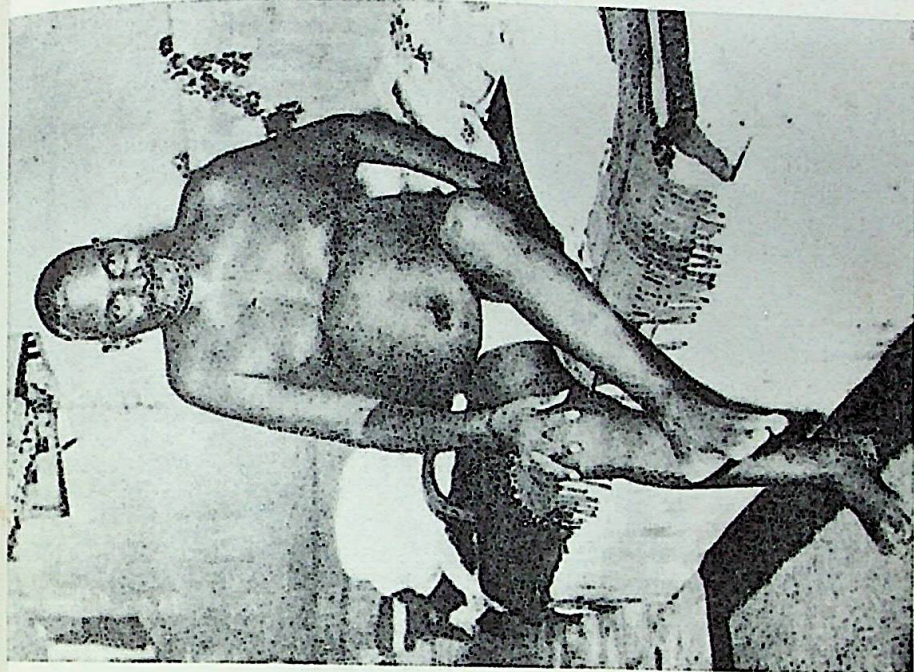
At last I saw that it was not a matter of Shakti experiences, or even of Self-experiences, but of understanding as a radical path or premise. This way may be accompanied by various phenomena, but only understanding is the intelligence and constant exercise of truth. The only constant possibility in real life is understanding itself. If we cling to any of our experiences, they become separative and lead us again to dilemma and the avoidance of relationship. One must be willing to abandon everything for understanding, making understanding the radical premise and activity in the process of real enquiry: "Avoiding relationship?" This enquiry is in the form of understanding. It is the enquiry of understanding, which is no-seeking. This is my experience and my certainty.

With these last descriptions of the summary observations made late in 1970, the present autobiography comes to an end. But the major work is yet to be accomplished. It has all been a preparation and a justification for the way of understanding, which I must now describe. The lessons that provoke what I must now write are all contained in my life as I have told it. But the way itself depends on true hearing, which involves true listening or attention. And true hearing must lead to self-observation, understanding and real enquiry.



"My work is to awaken men to the Heart."







Sri Ramana Maharshi



Sai Baba of Shirdi



Patricia Morley



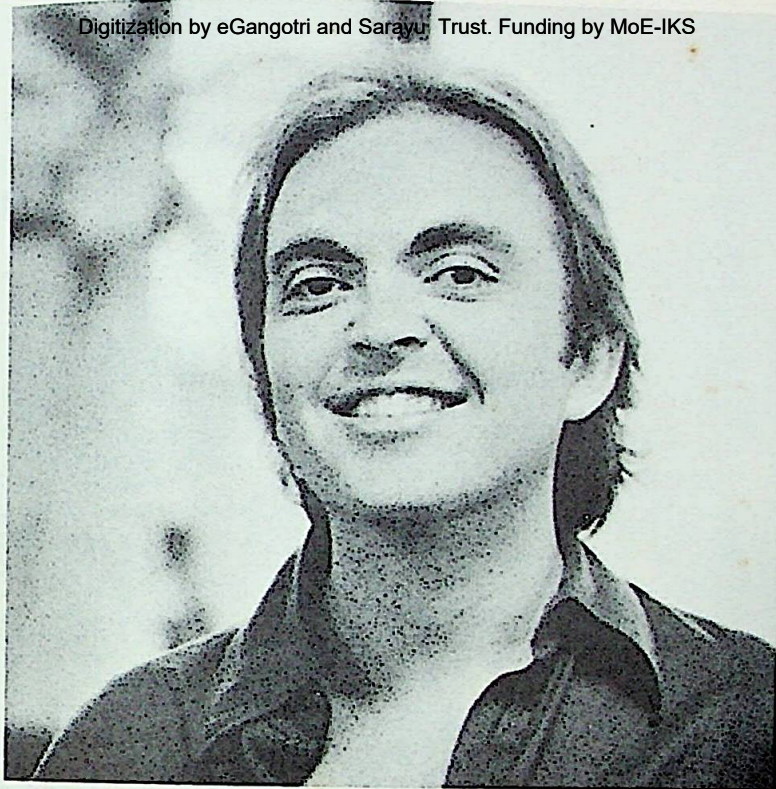
Nina Jones



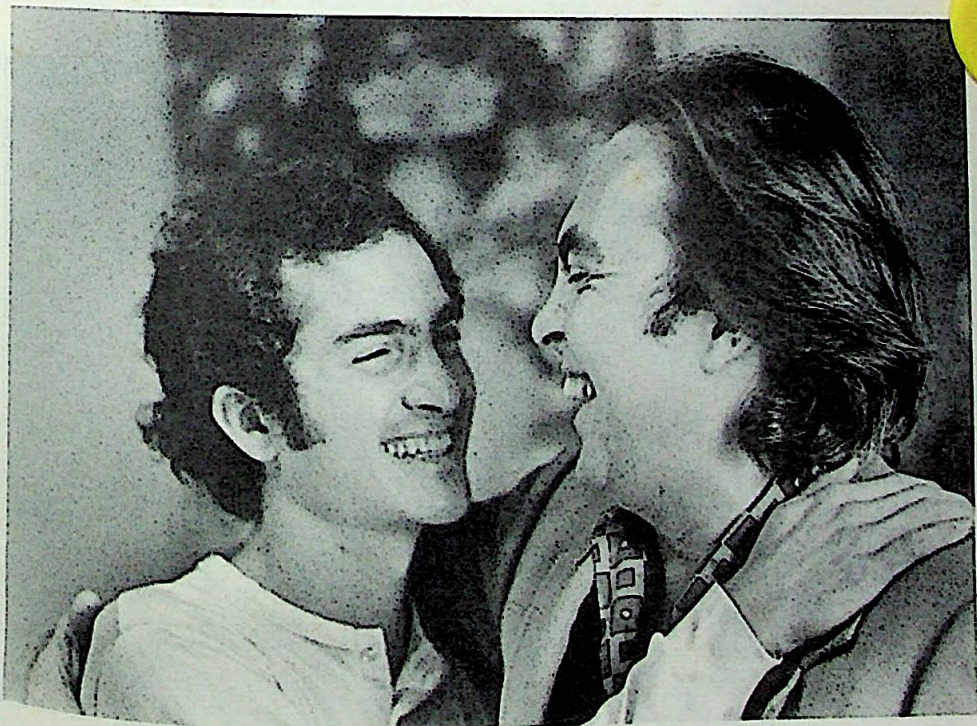
"I am the Loved-One. I am Shakti. I am He."



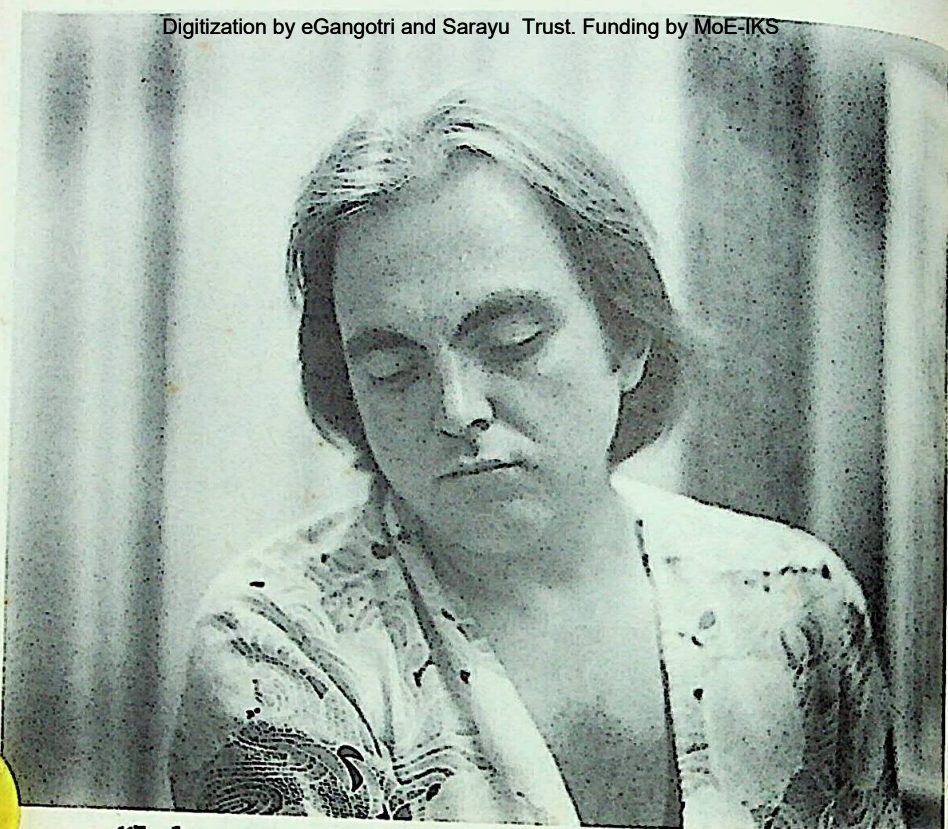
"This is the other world."



"Joyous Light surrounds your head."



"I do not offer them a method but a relationship."



"I always see everything within my own Form."



"I hold up my hands."

Part Two:
THE MEDITATION OF UNDERSTANDING

Real meditation doesn't do anything for you. It has no purpose. When a person begins some form of seeking, he immediately turns to an effective, remedial technique that will get him quickly to his goal. Thus, when a man adapts to various kinds of religious and spiritual effort, he begins almost immediately to meditate in some way. The Christian and the devotee begin to pray and adapt to religious forms. The spiritual seeker begins to concentrate and internalize the mind. Others use drugs, study, critical thought, relaxation and poetry, pleasure, etc.

But real life, the way of understanding, is not another form of seeking. For the man of understanding, meditation is not adopted for the sake of something else. He does not pursue understanding or reality or any kind of experience through meditation. Real meditation is already a radical activity. It *is* understanding.

In the logic of Narcissus, the separative mentality, all things are seeking. But the man of understanding perceives the logic of reality and lives as it. Therefore, he is not concerned about meditation. His business is understanding, not ascent, vision, transformation, liberation, or any other goal. The way of understanding belongs to those who recognize the fruitlessness of seeking.

I do not recommend that you meditate. There is only understanding. Therefore, understand. And when understanding has become observation,

reflection, insight and radical cognition, then the state of consciousness itself is meditation. When understanding has become a radical process, and the avoidance of relationship has become an inclusive and sufficient recognition, when you have understood that seeking is all a function of dilemma, and when you no longer are voluntarily motivated by the physical, mental or spiritual problem, then you are already meditating.

Meditation is simply understanding as a radical process in consciousness. It is what understanding is when it has become necessary and profound. There is no right motive for adopting it. There is only the discovery that you are already doing it.

Thus, when understanding has become founded in you by observation of your life, and you have truly realized the radical process of avoidance on every level of your being, then you have ceased to approach life without intelligence, simply reacting, becoming motivated, and seeking various ends. Instead, you have begun to approach all experience with a simplicity in consciousness, a presence you bring to all things, which is understanding.

When you have begun to approach life with understanding, knowing the radical truth of understanding, then you have begun to meditate. Then understanding, the logic of reality, can be extended as itself to conscious or real meditation.

Real meditation is not purposive. It has no effect that it seeks to produce. It has no dilemma to solve. It has already become understanding, and

understanding is conscious knowing. Understanding is in fact the knowledge that is consciousness, non-separation, reality. Therefore, it is the enjoyment of consciousness. To understand is already to meditate, to contemplate consciousness itself. And it does this not by an act of concentration on consciousness, or any form or center of consciousness, but by understanding experience, the action of consciousness.

Where there is understanding in life, what is actually being known is consciousness, unqualified reality. Thus, the understanding of experience by observation leads to the recognition of the avoidance of relationship as a radical activity. And even where this recognition arises it will also cease to be the fundamental object or activity of conscious life. It will simply give way to the fundamental perception prior to avoidance, which is reality, unqualified relationship, consciousness.

Thus, understanding first becomes actual in the mind, and then it is extended as enquiry. Enquiry is the approach of understanding to experience. And enquiry is meditation. It is in the form: "Avoiding relationship?"

As enquiry continues as the radical activity of life, even enquiry becomes occasional. Even in the beginning it is not repetitive, like a mantra. That which is identified and enjoyed in consciousness through enquiry does not need constant enquiry to reduce the tendencies of the mind and life to prior understanding. That reality which is the source and realization of enquiry eventually becomes the ready object of the mind and life,

and one tends to return to it easily and naturally.

Thus, when understanding becomes radical knowledge, there is no constant enquiry, no special meditation. Knowledge becomes consciousness itself, which is unqualified, which is "no-seeking" in the heart and "no-dilemma" in the mind.

The first form of meditation enjoyed in my life was the "bright." It is also the ultimate one. But the "bright" of my childhood was not fitted to understanding. It was not supported by real consciousness. I perceived it, but I could not control it. And at last it disappeared against my wishes. Thus, I became devoted to a path of seeking, but it was aided by my earliest intuition of reality, the "bright." I was required to pursue the faculty of my own consciousness. And I needed to understand before I could finally create, sustain and control the "bright," the Form of Reality.

The history of my experience as a seeker is a course of experimentation in relation to the forces of life conceived as the problem of existence on various levels of experience. In college I dealt with truth as an intellectual problem. In my period of writing and self-exploitation I dealt with it as a vital and emotional problem. With Rudi I dealt with it as a moral and psychic problem. In Scientology I dealt with it as the problem of the mind. With Baba I dealt with it as a spiritual problem, the problem of super-consciousness. And when I experimented with such things as diet, fasting and self-regulation, I was dealing with it as a physical problem.

Of course, these various researches often over-

lapped and tended to become inclusive, but for the most part each was a highly specialized, exclusive endeavor. And each period was marked by a peculiar method. The area pursued also determined the nature of the work. The object created the subject, and the subject reinforced the object. And in every case the end phenomenon was the same. It was understanding. It was concentration and observation. Then insight. Then enjoyment or freedom on the basis of that insight. Finally, the recognition of understanding itself as primary and prior to the search.

Until I had exhaustively investigated every unique area of the "problem," there was no conclusive understanding. Thus, each moment of primary understanding, such as the crisis in college or the one in seminary, was only a temporary state. It formed only a moment of transition prior to the next phase, the next level of the problem. But when every aspect of life as a problem and a search was exhausted, there was only understanding. Then I recognized the similarity between each moment of attainment. And I began to notice in detail the aspects of the way of understanding itself as a radical path, prior to every kind of seeking.

Recently there has been a tendency among spiritual teachers to speak of a path of "synthesis." Sri Aurobindo is one of the leading exponents of this inclusive mentality. But it is also visible in lesser teachers of yoga, as well as in the various synthetic paths of modern Western occultism and religiously motivated spirituality. Sri Ramakrishna,

the great Indian teacher of the 19th century, perhaps initiated this trend in the East. And H. P. Blavatsky may be the sign of its origin in the West, also in the late 19th century.

But the trend to "synthesis" is only a synthesis of the kinds of seeking. It adapts the various separate activities of the great search to an inclusive philosophy and technique. But it remains a form of seeking.

In my own case, there was never any tendency to make a synthesis out of the various activities of my seeking. Indeed, as I passed through each form of my experiment, I only came to realize the fruitlessness of seeking in that way. And at last I saw the entire fruitlessness of seeking in any form. Thus, the way of understanding, as it developed in my case, is not a synthesis of the ways of seeking. It is a single, direct and radical approach to life. And that approach is itself, from the beginning, entirely free of dilemma and search. It has nothing to do with the various motivations of the great search. From the beginning, it rests in the primary enjoyment and truth that all seeking pursues. Thus, the way of understanding is founded in the radical truth that is fundamental to existence at any moment, in any condition. And it is also the genuine basis for creative life, prior to all the magical efforts toward healing, evolution and the victorious appearance of "spiritual" life.

The more I continued to indulge the yogic process the more I realized that it only and continually drew me into the forms of seeking,

either for the Shakti, the Self, or understanding. Thus, at last I saw that understanding was itself the only radical process, and enquiry was its activity. Then I abandoned the meditation on the chakras and the entire yogic process for enquiry. And enquiry was always epitomized as contemplation in the Heart, and the meditation of bliss in the Amrita Nadi.

I saw there was only a simple activity and concept manifesting under the form of every kind of remedial activity. It was always Narcissus, the logic and activity of separation. I examined all of this yoga, all of this seeking and performing, and all of its results, and I asked myself: Why? Why should such activities be engaged at all? What are the motives for meditating? And the more radical my understanding became, the more absurd, unnecessary and impossible it became to justify any of these exploits.

All ways showed themselves to be founded in some problem, some aspect of life as dilemma. There was the physical problem, the vital problem, the problem of the mind, the problem of spirituality and super-consciousness. There was the problem of morality, love, communication, sex, the problem of sin, suffering, the problem of powers, reality, truth, and the universe itself. Even the way of Ramana Maharshi was concerned with the problem of identity. But I saw that the problem, in any form, always had the same structure, and the same fundamental assumptions. Thus, I became concerned with motivation, the principle of these various kinds of action, belief, knowledge, etc.

I saw that, since all ways were founded in a problem, real life must be founded in the understanding of the primary problem that is the source of all ordinary activity. Only thus do we know and enjoy reality, even in spite of moment to moment problem creation.

I saw that understanding was itself motiveless. But everything else was in fact the avoidance of relationship, and this was their very motivation! Thus, the longer a man lives, the more complicated, contradictory and suffering life appears.

I saw that understanding was not some unusual, miraculous condition or perception. It is the simplest activity, utilized by everyone in his daily experience. It was only that men abandoned understanding in order to exploit the kinds of seeking. But when attention is drawn to understanding, the whole movement of seeking comes to an end. The man only understands where he would otherwise seek. Understanding was simply a matter of observing oneself in relationship, in action, in life. And if a man could be drawn to understanding and always firmly returned to it, he would begin only to understand. Understanding would replace his ordinary habit of seeking, and his consciousness and activity would become simplified, free of prior dilemma. And this very state, when it became the radical premise of anyone's existence, was not in any way different from the primary realization of yoga or traditional meditation. It was the same knowledge and capacity of fundamental reality, but radically free of any limitation to certain kinds of action, mentality or experience.

I saw that men could easily be turned to self-observation. And the process of observation could easily be maintained by proper guidance or "hearing." And that process of observing gradually saw the emergence of fundamental insight. Men could understand the radical nature of seeking, the adventure of Narcissus, the whole complex life of the avoidance of relationship. And when understanding arose, men could easily apply understanding to moment to moment experience. Then understanding became the approach to life, rather than all the automatic, confused activities of seeking, the drama of Narcissus. In that case, understanding became enquiry in the form of understanding itself: "Avoiding relationship?" And the abiding in relationship with the use of enquiry became the fundamental activity of conscious life moment to moment or in special periods of enquiry which might be called "meditation."

Such a way might automatically produce the unusual phenomena of "kriya yoga," or the whole expanse of intuitive knowledge. Or it might simply realize the natural existence of no-seeking, no-dilemma, primary creativity and freedom. I described these results as follows:

But the truth of real life is simply what is when there is a removal of contradictions, no-dilemma, no-search. It cannot be described, nor is any name appropriate for it. There is no motive to name it. It is not an object, nor a supreme and other subject. It is not separate from the one who understands, nor can he separate himself from it. It is simply no-problem, no-search, unqualified reality without implications. It is also the form of reality, which is the most

subtle structure of the world and everything, even the form of consciousness. All of this is obvious to one who understands and continually enquires.

Thus, as I became firmly grounded in understanding as a radical approach to life, making no use of any other exercise or remedial method, I saw that it corresponded exactly to the ultimate truth and reality I had enjoyed at times in the past. And it was exactly the way indicated by the highest, most subtle forms of conscious perceptions that were recently realized in me. Then I set about to describe the way of understanding as meditation as I had known and done it all my life.

The Process of Real Meditation

The usual meditation is only a consolation, an effect, and a good feeling. It provides no radical reversal of ordinary consciousness, and when situations arise out of meditation the person has no control over the process of identification, differentiation and desire.

Only radical understanding avails. It is the viewpoint of reality itself. It is not attachment to some body, realm or experience that is seen as the alternative, remedy, cure and source of victory. It knows that every motive and action is made of avoidance. Thus, it has no recourse except to understand. And understanding as well as the one who understands are Reality, the Self, the "bright."

The yogic search only enjoys forms of Shakti, the bliss of energy. Only radical knowledge is real bliss, dependent on nothing.



Understanding arises when there are true hearing and self-observation in relationship. Therefore, make use of such teachings as this present one, and observe yourself in life. Observe yourself when you seek. Observe yourself when you suffer to any degree. Observe your motives. Observe the activity of identification. Observe the activity of differentiation. Observe the activity of desire. Observe the patterns of your existence.

When you see that you are always seeking, understanding is emerging. When you see the pattern of Narcissus as all your motives, all your acts, all your seeking, understanding is emerging. When you see you are always suffering, understanding is emerging. When you see that every moment is a process in dilemma, understanding is emerging. When you see that every moment is a process of identification, differentiation and desire, understanding is emerging. When you see that every moment, when you are at your best as well as when you are at your worst, you are only avoiding relationship, then you understand. When you see that which already is, apart from the avoidance of relationship, which already absorbs consciousness prior to the whole dilemma, motivation and activity of avoidance, then you have finally understood.

When you have understood, understanding will become the natural response of your intelligence to any experience, the total content of any moment. Then approach every moment with understanding, and perceive the original truth within it. Devote some time in the morning and evening to conscious understanding. Sit down, turn to understanding, and enquire of yourself as thoughts, feelings, and movements arise within to distract you. Enquire in the form of understanding: "Avoiding relationship?"

Do this for a half hour or an hour in the morning and evening, when you rise from sleep or just before retiring. Do it also briefly at any moment in the day when strong distractions absorb you. Devote yourself to understanding in the midst of all experience, instead of any kind of remedial action that arises as a way to handle the problem of life at any moment.

Make understanding and enquiry your radical approach to life. Become more and more absorbed in understanding and the cognition of present freedom. Understand and enquire, until these things become realized permanently as your form. Enjoy and create according to the wisdom of your own form.



Until understanding becomes a radical activity, it simply involves the observation of experience, appearing as levels of being, bodies, realms and experiences. Then it is not "meditation," and the individual need only observe and understand.

But when understanding is fulfilled in the conscious, inclusive and transforming cognition of experience and seeking, then meditation will become a real impulse.

At this point the individual should begin to enquire, and this is his meditation, whether or not he does it as a formal exercise. When he has the impulse to do it formally or intensively, he should do it as I am describing it here.

When meditation has become radical consciousness, then abide in that consciousness which is no-seeking in the heart. And when you act, remain in this natural meditation, or enquire, as you feel inclined.



The world is seeking, nothing more. And all seeking is suffering and separation as continuous creations. They are created by the perpetual activities of identification, differentiation and desire. These are the mechanism of the avoidance of relationship. And these three are continuously performed in the various levels of being, corresponding to what are called the "chakras" or the circuit of creative centers, and the various bodies, realms and experiences. The consciousness of the seeker is a constantly changing perception of dilemma. And in all that he does he is always only avoiding relationship.

Understanding is the recognition of seeking as the active principle of our lives. It recognizes the effects of seeking, its qualities and sources, the areas of its operation, and the methods of its

functioning. It sees that seeking is the substance and the entire meaning of every moment of our ordinary lives.

But understanding, since it is radically aware of seeking, is not seeking. Understanding is prior to and apart from every kind of seeking and the whole drama of ordinary life. Therefore, it not only sees all life as seeking, but enjoys itself as fundamental reality prior to all seeking. It perceives no-seeking, non-avoidance, non-separation, unqualified relationship, and unqualified consciousness.

The enquiry ("Avoiding relationship?") is the form of understanding. When understanding has in fact developed as an insight as a result of hearing the truth and observing life, then it is brought to life directly in the form of enquiry. The man who enquires is no longer seeking but continuously understanding seeking. Seeking is no longer the form of his action or his consciousness. Understanding has become the form and action of his consciousness.

As understanding and enquiry continue, the forms of seeking and the whole enterprise of separative life pass before the one who enquires. And continually the sources of that action and the consciousness that identifies with them are brought to the condition of understanding. By degrees the man of understanding becomes less and less absorbed in the forms of seeking, and understanding and enquiry lead constantly to the reality that is their foundation. Attention gradually ceases to be involved in the seeking and the understanding of seeking, and it rests in that which understanding

itself is, and to which enquiry constantly leads attention.

Finally, there is no-seeking, no enquiry, no understanding of seeking. There is no dilemma, no suffering, no separation. There is no identification, no differentiation and no desire. There are no levels of being, no bodies, realms or experiences. These are no longer perceived apart. They are themselves lived or known as reality and consciousness.



Enquiry is not a process of self-analysis. Its purpose is not to draw the mind into all kinds of formulations and the deep self-consciousness of endless patterns. Enquiry is not "concerned" with the nature and forms of avoidance. Nor is the analytical awareness of the whole pattern of one's life of avoidance the same as understanding.

One who enquires remains attentive to the question, to the one who receives the question, the place where the question is received, and to what arises. Until something arises, he only remains in the enquiry in its place. Finally, by his remaining in the enquiry, what arises will reveal itself to consciousness as the avoidance of relationship.

It makes no difference what arises or what is the character of the particular form of avoidance, for, as soon as it is consciously recognized, one ceases to exist in that form of separation and avoidance. One is not concentrated in the recognition or the analysis of avoidance. Instead, one becomes aware of relationship. The unconscious image of

separation is replaced by the conscious awareness of relationship, of unqualified, present relationship. Unconscious avoidance does not merely become self-conscious, as in analysis. Rather, the one who avoided relationship before becomes aware of that from which he was separated. Instead of remaining unconscious in avoidance and separation, he becomes conscious in relationship.

Over time, enquiry realizes the Form of Reality which contains this sense of unqualified relationship. One sees that enquiry is directed to the heart and is received in the heart. The heart is realized to be the point where consciousness enters into relationship. Then one recognizes the Presence, the whole Form of relationship over against consciousness. But at last this direct cognition becomes Self-awareness. When all avoidance of relationship subsides in the heart, and unqualified relationship is enjoyed directly, then the ordinary trend of consciousness is reversed or dissolved. The one who appears in relationship becomes aware of himself, his real, present nature and Presence as Reality. Then the thing he enjoyed before as unqualified relationship is realized to be his own nature and form.



Understanding is seated in consciousness. It is conscious realization. It is not seated in dilemma or any effect. It is not seated in the unconscious or subconscious, nor does it wait upon these as if they contained the source of its true intelligence

or content. Neither is it seated in the super-conscious planes or wait upon them, by excluding consciousness or what is below consciousness, as if exclusive super-consciousness alone were the center and source of its only mind. It is reality functioning on the level of consciousness or the conscious mind, which is the focal point or medium of what is above and below.

Thus, the seat of understanding as a free activity at first appears in the head. A point in the very center of the head is the seat of the force of the conscious mind. That point of awareness is openly receptive to the stream of consciousness, above and below. Thus, it is linked to the processes below, which are unconscious and subconscious, as well as those above, which are super-conscious or non-mental.

In the process of enquiry, which is real meditation, a man simply rests in understanding. In formal meditation he merely sits comfortably and free of the need to respond to activities in his environment. He already understands. He has already examined the nature of suffering, of dilemma and of action. Thus he sits and enjoys the fullness of understanding in his form at that moment.

Enquiry begins at the point where he becomes aware of movements or representations to his conscious awareness. Depending upon the stresses of his life expression at that moment, his awareness will tend to move or become associated with attention to movement or tension, thought or feeling in some area or plane of the body. Thus, his awareness will be directed from the center of awareness

in the head, analogous to the viewpoint of his eyes (which should ordinarily remain closed) toward some area of his form, above or below.

In general, he will probably move naturally in attention toward some process analogous to the lower body. He will be aware of some sexual tension, or some energy below, or some feeling. These sensations also correspond to the lower "chakras," the creative centers of energy at the base of the spine (anus), the sacral center (sexuality), and the navel or solar plexus (personal power). The enquiry, which is the free activity of understanding, should thus be allowed to confront whatever area the mind tends to pursue. When this movement begins, he should enquire "Avoiding relationship?" He should not seek to remove the tendency itself. He should only enquire. If the tendency remains, he should only enquire. If he becomes disturbed that the tendency does not vanish, he should only enquire of that disturbance. Whatever arises, he should only enquire.

This enquiry can be done as an internal mental activity, either as a silent verbalization of the mind in understanding, or as an intention of understanding without internal verbalization. The frequency of the enquiry should be determined by the individual, as he perceives the practical effect of his approach.

As the enquiry proceeds, the tendency of attention will begin to break up and dissolve. The enquiry is understanding, and so the form of consciousness will begin to disassociate or detach from the area of attention and rest in understanding. The ex-

perience will be one of relief or release of attention and a return to rest in a kind of fullness. As one area of attention dissolves, another tendency will replace it and gather the energy of consciousness. Then the enquiry should follow it as before and continue until it also dissolves or is replaced.

The man who is beginning the way of understanding is likely to feel the tendency of consciousness to move in a chronic pattern of attention in the lower body. This is only natural, since we chronically associate with the life processes, the energies of the lower body. Food-desire, sex, vital communication, etc. are the basic and chronic content of ordinary life. Real life is not opposed to such energies or experiences. They are not the problem, nor are they necessarily destructive. Indeed, they are in the form of life and are part of our present fulfillment. We are not constrained to transcend these centers of energy and lock them out.

Thus, there is no peculiar dilemma or "lowness" involved in the tendency to concentration in the lowest dimensions of our creative existence. We remain in understanding even then and suffer no motive to escape or destroy them. The dilemma is not in the existence of such processes of life and energy, but in the enforced concentration in them apart from understanding. Such concentration is the root of suffering, of separateness and the motives of dilemma. Thus, it is only necessary to abide radically in understanding and not despair of it. It is only necessary to enquire and not turn

to some activity apart from understanding which seeks to abolish the lower energy itself.

Over time the man who understands will experience gradual relief from the symptoms of his problematic life. In his ease he will naturally and voluntarily change the patterns of his life. They will simply fall away in the force of understanding and the full bliss of his consciousness. Indeed, even before a man begins to adapt to the processes of enquiry and meditation, he must have understood. And he will already have modified his behavior in the direction of an easy internal control. Understanding, even before it develops into profound internal enquiry, is already a purifying force that relieves a man from much voluntary self-exploitation that he previously added to chronic difficulty.

Thus, enquiry continues to attend to the tendency of consciousness in meditation. Where understanding has become well-developed through this experience, or in a man relatively free of enforced concentration in the lower energies, the attention will gradually move into higher areas. Then he may tend to the emotions of the heart and even its psychic depth. Abiding in understanding, he should enquire also of these: "Avoiding relationship?" And so this concentration will also ease. He may move higher, and deeper, into the subtle center in the throat, which is also the seat of Shakti, and so witness the display of power, the higher psyche, the vibrations and glowing mentality of profound internal regions. He should abide in understanding and continue to enquire. No matter where his mind tends to

move, he should continue to enquire, gently but intensively, directly to the content of his involvement.

In any case, the field of his attention is always a separative movement, as he will discover by enquiry, by radically holding to understanding, which is the source of enquiry. The result of this process of understanding appears to be a kind of ascent, as if there were an abandonment of the lower. This is, however, not in fact the case. There is simply a relaxation of attention.

Ordinarily we are drawn into enforced, chronic, and exclusive attention in various centers of energy or experience. These become the foundation of our point of view, and so a man who is profoundly and exclusively concentrated in some complex of experience feels that energy overwhelmingly, and everything else, including the centers of his conscious life apart from that, appears over against it. This is the mechanism whereby men acquire the root consciousness of separateness and the chronic activity of separateness. But when a man clings to understanding this complex of concentration eases and relaxes, so that he regains the natural contact with the total circuit of conscious life, which natively and already knows its freedom and wholeness.

As a result of the way of understanding through enquiry, the forms of chronic concentration are relieved, and the man abides in understanding rather than the exclusive centers of concentration. The process of enquiry is not a search for understanding or any effect, but it is understanding

maintaining itself and knowing itself under all conditions. Thus, in one who continually understands, fear and chronic reactivity are gradually stilled. What in fact has happened is that he no longer is concentrated in some separate complex of energy, some portion of the circuit of being. The man who is fixed in animated sexuality and acquisition, which tend to exhaust and dissipate life energy, becomes vital, healthier and stronger as this concentration is eased, and he restores the internal connection with the higher center in the solar plexus. Just so, a man experiences an emotional expansion and a true relational ability as he restores the connection to the creative center at the heart. His effectiveness and power increase as he opens even higher in the throat and the mental centers in the head.

Thus, we see that the ascent which this process involves is in fact not an abandonment of the lower, but a greater and greater inclusiveness, so that the man begins to function as a whole and experiences creative control over life-processes. This inclusiveness and not any kind of exclusive ascent or descent, is the form of real existence, of creative life. And the way of understanding is the root of that inclusive and real life.

As the process of real meditation increases in its radical intensity, the man will find that the mind tends less and less to concentrate in the centers below the head. In time he will have achieved such ease of internal relationship to life, and he will have come to exercise such creative control or use of the life process, that he will not be drawn

excitedly to the impressions of the life-complex. His enquiry will quickly move through these movements, and he will center easily in the form of understanding, in a fullness that is silent and blissful. He will enjoy the radiant calm and certainty that is natural to the center of consciousness in the head. Such a man has achieved creative realization of the unconscious and sub-conscious life process. He has not abandoned life, nor does he minimize it. It has simply become an area of creative enjoyment that is usable to him and free of necessary dilemma.

Such a person will then also feel the mind, the center of consciousness or conscious understanding, tend upward toward what is in fact super-conscious, prior to life-individuality. In meditation he will experience a new form of enquiry. The problem in the mind and the creative centers below the head is generally one of the refusal of relationship in a concrete sense. It is life-abandonment, the refusal of life processes, the life of love and inclusion, of intelligence and human creativity, the whole pattern of desire. But when enquiry is drawn above, toward what is not conscious but super-conscious, and thus not presently included in the field of the mind, the individual begins to comprehend the avoidance of relationship on a new level. Then it is not a matter of the avoidance of concrete relationship by separating yourself as an entity from other entities. Personal existence in the world is not an immediate function of the higher conscious life.

Thus, as the individual is drawn above, toward

the aperture at the top and slightly to the rear of the head, he should remain in understanding and enquire as before, but his realization will not be one of relational ease. Instead, he will perceive that the very concept of his individual existence as it functions on a conscious level and down into the subconscious and unconscious life levels is in fact the source of dilemma or separateness. He will simply see that it does not apply, indeed, does not exist, and the separative movement that creates it on the mental level will simply dissolve. In that intense perception in understanding, the fundamental activity of identification and differentiation will reveal itself and subside, at first for brief moments, and then easily, for longer periods, until it becomes a constant that also affects the operating basis of the conscious mind.

Those who pursue this very perception as an exclusive goal call it "enlightenment" or "Self-realization," a kind of once and for all attainment. In fact it is only the natural perception of super-consciousness. If a man has manipulated himself in dilemma to the point of temporary abandonment of the "lower" life and even the living mind, he will feel he has attained reality, and so await the dissolution of his personal existence at death. But the man who understands does not abandon understanding or life. He has no motive for doing so. He will not be troubled by the return to mental life and human existence. He simply understands that he has begun to include an even higher center and source of true being in life.

In any case, whatever arises in meditation,

you should abide in understanding and simply enquire. In time, the movement of consciousness will not even tend to the point of super-consciousness above. The enquiry will become radical knowledge prior to every kind of activity and perception. Then you will find that understanding even ceases to function as a mental activity. It will have become radically concentrated in that to which the enquiry always leads. That silence, incomparable depth and formless object of contemplation will become utterly absorbing. Then, suddenly, you may find that you are seated in the true heart. All the movements of consciousness, on every level, will have fallen away, and you will remain tacitly aware as no-seeking in the heart, to the right side of the chest. You will possess unqualified knowledge of Reality and enjoy untouchable bliss. And it will be the same bliss you knew as understanding.

But do not seek this state, and, if it comes, continue to enquire as soon as you possess a mind with which to enquire. As your enquiry continues you will discover that you rise again out of the heart, or you will release the power of the heart upwards, while yet remaining founded in the heart. You will experience the current of bliss and joy rising again to the sahasrar. And this current or circuit of bliss will remain, even under the conditions of enquiry, as your fundamental form. It is the Amrita Nadi, the "bright." It is enjoyment, no-dilemma, and it contains every creative faculty. In that form, as you continue the life of understanding and enquiry, you will enjoy the con-

tinuous flowering of every kind of wisdom and knowledge.

Understanding, from the beginning and forever, is the source of our true and real life. It is possessed of no exclusive goal, and thus it is not motivated to concentrate above or below. Its motivation is its own and very form, which is already inclusive. Thus, just as we in our ordinary humanity suffer by exclusive concentration in what is "below" understanding, we would likewise suffer by exclusive concentration in what is "above" it.

To concentrate in the centers or realms of the super-conscious is a separative activity, not an inclusive one. It is enforced and recommended by the teachings invented in the great search. Real life, radically founded in understanding, maintains the form or circuit of conscious life. The full life of understanding is not one in which the unconscious and subconscious become conscious activities of the mind (although such is at least experimentally possible, as proven by certain yogis). Nor is it one in which the super-conscious becomes a conscious process under the control of the conscious mind (although such control or consciousness appears to be represented in the attainment of certain great saints). The full life of understanding is one in which the unconscious and subconscious processes remain as such, and so also with the super-conscious processes. The difference is that the dilemma is removed, and the link or circuit between them all, the process of consciousness and conscious understanding, is attained, asserted and enjoyed.

Thus, the real man is creatively present. He

operates in the mind of understanding, which is fully bathed in the higher light, and it moves into the creative realization and even evolution of life. This real man is the future man of all the universes. In him the creative movement coming out of the heart will find fulfillment in the great realization of manifest existence.

Such men, who abide radically in understanding, and so realize life apart from dilemma, search and fear, are creatively involved in maintaining and using the form of reality. They operate to restore that form by constantly regaining the circuit of consciousness and power that begins in the heart. And they move to make that form the basis for all actual existence, even what we call the human.



The enquiry doesn't produce an instant result simply because it is used. Often you must enquire for some time before it becomes conscious and intense, operative as understanding rather than method. When you enquire you are not dealing with words but meanings. And you are directing it not to unconscious and material forces, but to mind and consciousness, which are also aware of these. Thus, often in meditation, it takes some time for understanding to arise and real meditation to begin.

Therefore, when you meditate, meditate with understanding, and continue to enquire until it moves into consciousness, recognizes the forms of avoidance, resumes the form of relationship,

and creates an opening and release of bliss.

Frequently you will find a sudden opening or release in the heart. It is the release of consciousness, bliss and energy to the Amrita Nadi. This opening, fullness, ease and release is the typical result of each daily meditation. Of course it is not a "required" experience. It is only that you may perceive it, and so I have accounted for it. Simply understand and enquire with intensity, not as a method or a program to create various effects, but as an activity in consciousness.



This meditation is described in terms of the vital physical body. But it is not identical to it or contained in it. This meditation can be done exactly as described in any body, even some subtle, psychic body. Every body is in the Form of Reality, the Amrita Nadi. The same centers and the same relationships pertain in each body and every realm of universe. Every experience and every plane of being is a manifestation within the same instrument. From the point of view of the Form of Reality there is no higher or lower body. Every body is the same form, the same terminal of bliss and enjoyment, the same seat of consciousness and truth. There is no need for ascent or descent in the name of truth. There is only present understanding.



Enquiry is not simply directed to various actions that are concrete avoidance. It is delivered

to oneself directly. It is not: "Is this action the avoidance of relationship in some sense?" Rather, its significance is in the form: "Presently avoiding being already, entirely in relationship?" Thus, it moves you directly to self-awareness that is ineffably, unqualifiedly in relationship.

The enquiry is not the form: "Are you avoiding relationship?" or "Am I avoiding relationship?" There is no dramatized separation in the mind between oneself as the questioner and oneself as the hearer. The one consciousness enquires of itself, or, in actual effect, observes itself alive in the present moment. There is simply the observation of the total, present context of real experience.

One does not enquire as, or of, some surrogate entity, part of the mind, separate function, or etc. The one who understands enquires of himself in the creation of the present moment. The enquiry is not a means of liberation, but real consciousness enforcing its own form as the present moment. Thus, it is necessary that the man who enquires be one who already understands. Enquiry is the activity of understanding. The enquiry is not understanding isolated as a method to produce an effect. The entire action of enquiring and realizing is understanding, and each part of it is itself understanding.

Simply enquire of yourself as yourself. When you feel yourself in the heart, enquire of yourself there as any tendency, any moment arises. There is no mystery, no difficulty implied in this activity. Understand, and enquire of the instant of your being. In the beginning it may appear that you

are seated in the mind, and enquire of your deeper self in some unrecognizable place or in the heart. But the process of enquiry is in fact in the heart and realizes itself in the heart. It is no-seeking and knows itself at last as no-seeking. When understanding becomes this revolutionary knowledge, the enquiry persists still. Until there is a radical realization utterly retired of all dilemma. Then, again, the fullness of being is assumed in the non-separate cognition of present reality.



The activity of enquiry continues as long as the mind tends to move and take on forms. But the most intense meditation is one in which the form of reality itself absorbs consciousness. Then understanding does not move with the mind to enquire of its forms, but rests prior to the mind (the function of consciousness which is receptive to and records experience).

One of the primary experiences in enquiry is a kind of letting go, but in its most intense form it is a kind of holding on. In the first case there is understanding but also a stimulated life-form that tends to separative experience. Thus enquiry, the arm of understanding, moves to view all these experiences as they truly are, and we are let loose in understanding. But when we have seen enough of this and know the game well, and when we almost naturally stand loose, then an entirely new form of consciousness emerges. We do not simply stand free, empty and apart. Instead, we recognize and enjoy that form which was always

there, the very armature on which all our parts and functions were set.

Whereas before we enquired: "Avoiding relationship?" and so felt images and tendencies dissolve, now we recognize and enjoy the silent, imageless and attentive state of our true being. When the automatic activity of avoidance subsides, then the natural, internal force and form of unqualified relationship comes into consciousness. The sense is simply one of unqualified relationship, always and already, prior to any particular experience, prior to present limitation, ignorance or "sin."

However, this realization is in understanding. It is not the same as the believer's sense of the all-embracing God outside of him. It is the most intense form of understanding, where enquiry has become fruitful in resonating the parts of the man. Then meditation becomes a natural activity of holding on, of unqualifiedly asserting that form, of being unqualifiedly related, non-separate, included, already inclusive of high and low, whatever the apparent conditions.

When the individual holds on to this perception, which is intense understanding, a forcefulness rises in him that purifies the remnants of mentality and the automatic demands that force him to identify with separated levels of his being. Suddenly he ceases to be held and limited to the concrete mind, the ground of emotionality, and the lower functions of vital and physical life. The force of his understanding has become an intense attention to the form of reality, and he feels

the limits of his consciousness expanding above to include the unitive dimensions of super-conscious intelligence.

The feeling is a kind of rushing ascent. The individual holds to his unqualified perception, the awareness of reality as inclusive, and allows himself to be drawn into the fullness of being. He may experience many effects of this purifying expansion, including a stiffening of the body or violent twisting and movement of the body, particularly the spine and neck. He may make symbolic gestures with his hands or body. There may be tensions of the face, of the upper head, of the area between the brows. He may be moved to laughter or tears, to make strange expressions with his face, to utter strange sounds. He may hear inner sounds, see visions, taste or smell internal emanations, or experience unusual internal sensations. He may feel heat or cold. He may sense vibrations, vast internal spaces, emptiness, silence, a living void filling with a descending force and light from an infinite consciousness and power above.

Thus, the primary activity of understanding moves from recognition to enquiry to holding on to the form of reality. That form is simply the armature or structure of being. Understanding or real meditation turns a man to the basic form of conscious life, and concentrates him in its primary center or thread, which is an open circuit between the heart and the head. Thus, by naturally holding on to that form, that consciousness which is unqualified, the man grows over time into his real fullness, and he will include the emanations of the

highest in the creative and functional realization of his life.



When enquiry has settled in the heart, awareness develops as what Ramana calls the "Amrita Nadi." I call it the "Form of Reality." It is the circuit of current from the heart to the head. As a child I knew it as the "bright." In the unqualified state all identification, differentiation, and desire have ended. There is only unqualified relationship realized in enquiry to be already the case. This realization is simply consciousness as the Amrita Nadi, the form of reality, and it is experienced as the "bright," the unconditional bliss of presence, of perfect knowledge, whose source is the heart, reality itself. Therefore, the "bright" is the form of that reality which is consciousness. It is true and real, the birthright of all existence.

Those who do not understand as reality in the heart only think in the head. They are in exile. They are seeking. Thus, they adapt to all paths, sensual and spiritual, the ways of exploitation and separation. But understanding and real enquiry are reality itself, and they resort to none of the means of suffering. Understanding is the unbroken act of conscious being, even in the one who knows perfectly. Thus, he remains untouched by what passes, but those who seek, like Narcissus, are always trying to become immune. Their struggle is as endless as his bliss.



Ramana typically urged people to pursue the source of their questions: Who is it? But this tends to turn most men to a form of motivated search. Understanding is not itself a question, a dilemma. It is in the form of a real observation. It is already knowledge that precludes the problem of subject and object. The enquiry that is understanding is not a question seeking an answer, but a form of knowledge enforcing itself.

Thus, we enquire: Avoiding relationship? This has consequences in regard to the subject and the object, the total configuration of experience and reality. It is founded not in the exclusive assumption of the "Witness," the heart, the Self, no-seeking as a permanent state apart from life. It is founded in the Form of Reality, the Atma Nadi or Amrita Nadi, the "bright," the inclusive, present force of the heart, the Self. Thus, it does not tend to rest in the prior Self but in the Form of Reality, which is the very form of the Self.

That Form was also the realization of Ramana, as I have tried to indicate. But he did not teach the way of that Form, although he indicated it. Thus, many teachers and paths have found disagreement with him and thought that he excluded the world and the creative verity of existence. I have been moved to understanding, which from the beginning embraces the fullness of the Form of Reality. It realizes the fundamental truth of the Heart, the Self, but also of present existence. It never precludes or seems to preclude the form of life.

Ramana seemed to abandon the states of

existence in the classical manner of Vedanta. Thus, karmas were to be dissolved and consciousness returned to its prior existence as the Self. But it is my experience that what appears to be "karma" from the point of view of the seeker is only creative existence from the point of view of Reality.

This is also true to Ramana's experience. And it is my experience that the realization of the Form of Reality itself precludes apparent withdrawal into the heart as a goal or an effect. There is no *withdrawal* into the heart as a radical activity. Such is only a temporary state. It is not the Form of Reality that is latent and secondary. Pure Self-awareness as an exclusive state is latent and secondary. That state is not radical, primary or true to the whole of existence. Not withdrawal in the Heart but existence as the Heart is true.

There is no dilemma in the manifest state. It is the foundation itself. It is the Form of Reality. And when consciousness and all Form withdraw into the pure nature, it is only a turn to rest, a cycle of refreshment. The Form of Reality is not a special creation or condition but the native form itself.

The way of understanding, from the beginning, is not motivated in dilemma or an exclusive predilection for a liberated experience. It turns on the very form of reality and is not dismayed, either by manifest existence or the withdrawal in the heart. In all things, it is seated in the primary Form and Source, and is not turned to dilemma, separation or seeking on the basis of any event.

Therefore, I am moved to speak the ultimate

truth that is the truth of Ramana and Vedanta, as well as the various intuitions and paths that justify creation. It is also the truth of Christ and of Sri Aurobindo. But its highest, most inclusive precedent is the revelation of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi.

And Ramana is not a source radically different from Bhagavan Nityananda, or my other teachers. He is their ultimate fulfillment and their perfect word. Nityananda is the "bright" incarnate. I see him always as that very Form of Reality. And Muktananda is his Form. It is only that, when my own path communicated its radical perception, I found its special forces duplicated in the recorded experience and words of Ramana. In fact, there is only the Form of Reality itself, and all my Gurus have shown only that Form to me.



The ultimate and simplest meditation is to gaze in the heart as no-seeking and allow its bliss to rise as fullness to the head, the silence of the sahasrar above the seat of the mind. Then there is only conscious enjoyment and no-dilemma, no separation, no-seeking. That is the enjoyment of the Form of Reality.

But this meditation is not a technique. It is discovered in the fullness of understanding. Otherwise it is an effort in dilemma. Therefore, understand, and perceive the Form of Reality. When enquiry has found no-seeking, but only bliss and pure consciousness in the heart, and when that bliss has been seen to rise to the sahasrar in the

Amrita Nadi, the Form of Reality, thereafter meditate as that and allow it to be so.

The Heart is the Guru. The Amrita Nadi is his Form. The bliss of unqualified enjoyment is his teaching. The knowledge of all this is liberation and freedom. The enjoyment of all this is Reality. The existence of all this is truth. The activity of all this is understanding. And understanding is real life.



In meditation the man of understanding may perceive a movement of consciousness and energy in relation to the centers in the body. The yogi, in his search for Shakti or the Self, draws energy down from above and directs it upwards along the spine to the sahasrar, then down to the point between the brows. He may even in time see it moving out of the sahasrar to return to its origin in the heart. But in the natural process of living being, generated from the heart and expanded as the Amrita Nadi, the circulation of energy is the reverse of the yogic process of return. It is instead a creative emanation from the heart which includes all forms, animates all forms, and sacrifices all forms again to the heart.

Thus, the man of understanding may perceive the blissful energy rising out of the heart to the sahasrar as the Amrita Nadi, his blissful presence. Then it may appear to descend through the various centers to the muladhar. In turn it may appear to rise again from the muladhar, through the root

of the sex center and the solar plexus, surrendering itself in the sahasrar above.

He may even perceive this movement in relation to the breath. When he inhales, the energy may appear to rise from below to the sahasrar and then drive downward to the heart. Then there may be a retention of breath accompanied by silence in the mind. When he exhales again the energy may appear to rise forcefully through Amrita Nadi to the "bright," then down through the centers in the spine to the muladhar, and rest there during another brief retention. Or this same process may appear to take place entirely between the heart and the sahasrar, so that consciousness does not appear to move through the forms of mind and life.

Seeing this, the man may think he has recovered a superior kind of yogic process. He may try to use it deliberately to control and purify the instrument. This may seem to be the very yoga of understanding itself. But he will find that as he begins to engage this process he will become a seeker as before. He will become concerned for purification, creative activities on a subtle level, various forms of concentration, etc. Thus he will begin to act again on the basis of a dilemma in consciousness and form.

He should simply remain in understanding and enquire. When such processes arise spontaneously he should simply understand and enquire. They will continue only by themselves and not bind him by identification, differentiation and desire.

Thus, he will only witness even these ultimate events, and he will remain in his own form, residing in the heart, generated as the "bright."



An experience similar to what I described as the "thumbs" may arise during real meditation. It is the "astral" or "desire" body, spherical in shape. When it arises, the individual is not entering the astral worlds of the psyche. He is discarding or surrounding the vital and physical form, at least temporarily. Then he may also find himself alive in visions, or illumined with subtle light. But if he continues to understand and enquire, he will find himself dissolved in the Heart of Silence. Then as enquiry continues, he will know only Reality. He will know the Eternal Form, the Amrita Nadi, the spire of Sound and Light that stands forever in the Heart.



Understanding is always beholding Bhagavan, the Form of Reality, whose center is the Heart, and whose extremities are the mind and the activities of enjoyment. There is nothing else that is ever experienced or known but this one enjoyment of reality, by reality, which is reality. There is only the one process, the one form, the one experience. It is beholding, enjoyment, unqualified present bliss. It has no special origination in time or form. Therefore, cessation or change has nothing to do with it. These things do not qualify it. They are only the conditions of the same primary enjoyment, as forms churning in the light, cycling about the sun, resolving and dissolving in an endless pattern

of enjoyment, as the loved-one turns herself before her lover.

When there is no understanding these things continue as dilemma, enforcing the adventure of Narcissus. When there is understanding these things continue as before, but consciously, in the Form of Reality. And the one who understands appears no different than before, except he is given to pleasures, laughter, wisdom and unqualified adventure.



When one lives as the "bright" one no longer knows oneself as descended, separate, etc. Thus, there is no longer any need to ascend through the chakras. There is only the present enjoyment of Amrita Nadi, the form of conscious reality. It is pure existence (no-seeking) in the heart. It is no-dilemma in the mind. It is bliss in the sahasrar. This radiance illumines all forms, all levels, all bodies, realms and experiences. It is the one experience. Everything else only reflects it. Thus, one who is aware as the Form of Reality gives life to all things.



There is only the avoidance of relationship, but you are in relationship even to this. You are what is always, already in relationship to whatever arises.

By enquiring of yourself in relationship, not yourself apart from the present configuration of relationship, you do the action of the Heart, and

you realize the enjoyment that is the Heart's consciousness.

When you have understood that you are always in relationship to whatever arises, and the movement of avoidance in you has become utterly vulnerable to understanding and present enquiry, thereafter be the Heart in relationship to whatever arises. If you are always present in relationship, not the avoidance of relationship, and enjoy that radical state under all conditions, you will not assume the forms of identification, differentiation or desire. You will simply be present in relationship, and this is itself perfect control, for it is not liable to identify with anything, to dissociate from anything, or to pursue anything by these means in desire. Then there is only the perception of what arises, and the direct, creative participation in what arises. There is no involvement in ignorance, conflict, compulsion or search.



If you are troubled by what arises, you are simply not in your proper relationship to things. You are not existing in relationship to what arises at all. You are avoiding relationship by an act of identification with what arises, differentiation from or within what arises, or some form of desiring or motivation produced by these and which seeks to overcome their implications in cognition and experience.

It is not necessary or true to try and overcome this dilemma and trouble. All such seeking only extends the same form by exploitation and re-

duction of the living Heart. Only understand and enquire. See your actual relatedness to things. See that you are only present and free. The Heart is not deep or subtle, but only present and free. If you only understand and do not seek, you will enjoy the creative ease of the Heart.

This understanding and enquiry does not cause things to vanish. Such is not the true means whereby you will cease to be perturbed. Understanding only realizes in you the nature and actuality of your relatedness, your position. There is no magic or subtle freedom involved in understanding. It is not a resort to religion, spirituality, or philosophical analysis. It is only the direct cognition and experience in relationship, as presence and creative non-identification, simple relationship, non-separation and love. Understanding is not separation or turning into subtlety and forms of mentality that are applied to what arises. It is simply the unqualified state, wherein the motive of avoidance does not arise. It is not the ground of the abandonment of what arises, but it is the ground of the creative use of what arises.



Understanding is not a matter of turning toward the Heart or the true Self. It is not a matter of concentrating on or in the Heart by any form of enquiry or search. It is not the action of meditating on the Heart or the Self by any means. Thus, it is unlike "Self-enquiry" or any other form of traditional meditation.

Understanding does not proceed by a gradual,

sudden or subtle removal of conditions. It is not the action of concentration within, toward deeper and deeper forms of subtlety, until the subject-consciousness is reduced to its exclusive source. It is not a matter of perceiving or entering into the Heart in some special state, where there is only potent void or subtlety, and a trance between you and ordinary awareness of the worlds.

Such is not itself the action and wisdom of the living Heart. It is search, not present understanding. But the true Heart is the present Heart, alive in these conditions that have already arisen, with which it is joined in cognition, perception and experience. The true Heart is the living Heart in the midst of what is now in the field of awareness. It is the present Heart, not the Heart to be sought and found by reduction and inwardness. It is the inclusive Heart, not the exclusive Heart we would seek in dilemma.

Things do not cease to arise. They have not ceased to arise. The Heart is not that which must be realized by turning from what arises. The Heart is present, not turned away. It is really present, not merely and subtly present. It is always present as understanding, alive as its radical nature. And we are already free, not by turning toward or away, not by concentrating on the Heart or on what arises in the absence of the Heart, but by remaining present as truth, which is understanding.

Understanding is a matter of remaining intelligently present under all conditions, whatever conditions arise, in the enquiry that is in the form of understanding. It is not a motivated concentration

on the Heart or the Self. It is not any inward turning, excluding what has already arisen in consciousness, toward any subtlety or subtler body. It is always enquiry in relationship to whatever arises as cognition and experience at each moment. It is the action of the present Heart, the living Self, not any search for him. It is only knowledge of the exact nature of experience in this instant.

One who thus enquires in life, in the waking state, or under any conditions that simply arise as subtlety or void, creatively maintains his true relationship to things, and he is not overcome. He does not prevent what arises by avoidance or search, but he always knows what arises in truth. It is simply that, whatever arises, he remains in relationship to it. It is not that he realizes or enforces any special relationship to it by analyzing or perceiving himself in some special way over against it. Understanding is not a perception of oneself in any gross or subtle form over against what arises. It is simply the perception of what arises, the direct cognition and experience of what arises, but in truth, not through the medium of avoidance.

Therefore, to know what arises in truth is simply to be in relationship to what arises. To be in relationship to what arises is the simple, unqualified action and nature of the Heart. Thus, understanding is simply to be in relationship to what arises, and not to be confused in what arises by the process of identification, differentiation or desire.

To be in relationship to what arises is not to find yourself identical to anything that arises.

It is merely to see it prior to identification. Therefore, relationship is the nature of the Heart's awareness prior to identification.

To be in relationship to what arises is not to differentiate yourself from what arises, or to perceive what arises as itself a differentiated field. Such differentiation also depends on identification and difference, not relationship. Therefore, non-separation is the nature of the Heart's awareness prior to differentiation.

To be in relationship to what arises is not to move by desire for anything that arises. Such desire depends on identification and differentiation in the midst of what arises, not relationship. Therefore, love is the nature of the Heart's awareness prior to desire.

Identification, differentiation and desire are not the action of the Heart in relationship to what arises. They are the avoidance of relationship, the turning. But the living Heart, the action that is understanding, is present in the midst of what arises as relationship, non-separation and love. And these are the natural, creative principles of conscious life. They are the principles whereby the Heart enjoys or realizes the worlds that arise.

To be present and alive as the Heart, even in the enquiry that is understanding, is to be already free of all dilemma, all the motives of seeking, the whole principle and adventure that is suffering and avoidance. For one who understands, directly, presently, there is no need or motive to turn away to find the Heart or Self. There is no need or

motive to turn into the worlds themselves through identification, differentiation and desire.

Understanding is simply to be present, whatever arises, whatever the conditions of cognition or experience, in any world or form. It is to be in relationship, actively, consciously, without implication, prior to the forms of identification, differentiation and desire that are the products of avoidance. It is to live as the Heart or real action in the midst of these forms, directly, consciously, in truth, as enjoyment, in the humor of reality. One who is thus present is the Heart, and he knows it.



All I have asked is that you understand.

It is a simplicity, signalled in many ways.

Do not imagine it is more or less than my plain word, the time you heard me and understood.

Part Three:

THE WISDOM OF UNDERSTANDING

What follows is a selection of essays and brief observations relating to the crucial matters of seeking and understanding. Most of it was written between September and December of 1970, following the summary events I have described in my autobiography. Portions of it were written even more recently, in the earlier and summer months of 1971.

These writings are the product of a daily unfolding in consciousness of the wisdom of understanding. Thus, they amount to a critical description of real life as opposed to the life of seeking in all its forms. They represent the intelligence in reality that exceeds and is entirely free of the great search.

What is written here cannot encompass the totality of the wisdom of understanding. But I have hoped to make it as comprehensive and as much to the point of seeking and understanding as possible. I have wanted understanding to find a radical communication through all of this.

Experience is void. It is without form, without qualification, without limitation or center. Memory is form, qualification, limitation, and the implication of subject or person. The infinite, the true, the unqualified, the real is always already known, but there is a functional confusion imposed by the memory of experience as images, sensations, reactions, feelings, etc., with boundaries, and a center. Memory is itself a symbol of reality with the real force of life hidden in the mystery of its form.

Thus, various teachings prescribe a path whereby the mind is emptied, suppressed, controlled, unburdened, etc. But such a path is endless, never finally epitomized or exhausted. To follow it is to

be involved in warfare based on the assumption of mystery, limitation and exclusive personality. All paths are means of interpreting the symbol which is the functional mind or memory with all its forms and planes. Thus, the phenomena of all paths are manifestations of the formal mind. By these means, reality itself is always not yet, always the goal of striving. And thus it appears symbolically and experientially as an exclusive peace whose very formlessness is itself a mysterious symbol.

It is my contention that reality is not properly the goal of striving. But it is the very source, foundation and motivation of real creative life. Thus, I abandon all paths, all mental techniques, all religions and spiritual fascinations. I adhere radically to the form of reality. By this understanding, the whole effort and strife of warfare with limited formal awareness is overcome. The dilemma is dissolved, not by action, but by prior truth.



The avoidance of relationship, whatever its causes in a real cosmology, history or physics, is what men ordinarily consider to be perception. The activity of perceiving something, anything, by any means, whether via sense experience, memory, or other mental process, is the very activity that creates the primary form we recognize as our suffering.

Until the avoidance of relationship has been fully comprehended in the direct process of understanding, there is no activity, no experience, no

moment in time or space wherein we do not manufacture the causes and effects of bondage and falsity. The avoidance of relationship creates by implication the sense of "I" as the limited capsule of life and the recognition of "other" as the universe or force wherein the self is contained, confronted, surrounded, manipulated and trapped.

Our most prior situation is one without qualification. It is creative, whole, full, undaunted, without center or bounds. However, without perfect understanding, this is merely an idea, a symbol. Indeed, the idea of "God," or "Self," or "Brahman," etc., is a reflection in the mind of this prior reality. But the paths of religion and spirituality point to such objects or goals without emphasizing the necessity of *prior* understanding for the actual attainment. Instead, they take the absence of understanding, which is a combination of faith or aspiration and ignorance or "sin," etc., as the primitive data wherein the path is created. Thus, life becomes means and effort toward salvation or liberation. It becomes a kind of counter-effort or de-conditioning, wherein life effects are removed by a kind of piece-work process. And the individual is called to value and seek the event of his de-conditioning, the moment of emptiness and stability.

In the ways of the East this emptiness, the removal of all effects, the pure Self, is valued as the primary state. In the West, the tendency is to value a point in time wherein a certain relationship will be epitomized, and all effects will be within the creative province of the unqualified

God. But nowhere, East or West, is it taught that all such paths and their goals are extensions of the very activity that is itself the dilemma. If it were taught, there would be no paths, no goals, no religions and no "spirituality."

Thus, to make real life possible, we must begin with understanding, not with a description of the goal, the opposite of suffering, not with a description of the path, the way out of suffering, not with a cosmology, which can only be true and real if produced and received in perfect understanding, and not with any analysis of the human mechanism, which, apart from perfect understanding, cannot be truly known but always remains confused with the dilemma itself.

Prior to understanding there is no value whatsoever in talking about "God," or "Self," the way and its means, the structure and phenomena of the original universe, or the instrumental entity who is related to all of these. These are fruitless notions since, prior to understanding, they are merely extensions of the form of the dilemma, and, when understanding is attained, these fall away and dissolve in the humor of reality. Thus, it is necessary to understand. And understanding is a matter of observing experience and the patterns of our lives.

I will try to state it plainly, from my own experience. When the pattern and contents, mentality and moment to moment activity of our lives is observed, it becomes clear that the primary symptom of all suffering is separation, being separate, limited, a self-exhausting capsule of

potential energy, and an activity operating to effect such a state. All suffering is an effected enclosure; emptiness, unconsciousness and death. And, over against this, the suffering individual perceives the universe in mystery, as a vast container of living potentiality and desirable force whose essential objectivity prevents both union and the manifestation of its essential nature.

Suffering is separation and separateness. And suffering is the primary fact for individual life. The problem of life for all men is how to realize life under the conditions of suffering. How to remain active, creative, relatively and at least temporarily fearless, optimistic and effective? The problem of life is the problem of humor and creativity.

And the way of life, whether in the case of the ordinary man in his medium solution, or in the case of the great seeker, is all of the intentional means of surmounting, overcoming, transcending and perhaps finally reversing the milieu of life as suffering. Death is the primary symbol encountered in all of the quests of humanity.

But understanding includes more than this recognition of suffering. For it becomes clear that all our events manifest not merely the element of separation, but that all of our activities, down to the most primitive mechanics of consciousness, are in fact a deliberate creation of separation or suffering itself.

This is where understanding abandons the path of the great solutions. Suffering, in this sense, has

been recognized by all of the great teachings in the world. But, in the past, suffering itself, described in the cosmologies of Buddhism and Vedanta, or, for example, in the symbols of Judeo-Christian history, has been conceived objectively, reduced to experience itself. Thus, the great paths have directed men to a solution to suffering, which is the whole apparatus of liberation or salvation, including its cosmology, its philosophy or theology, its means and techniques, its goals, and its significant phenomena.

But understanding does not root itself in the primacy of suffering or sin. It does not identify suffering with any irreducible necessity. It simply observes the content of experience with radical adherence, and does not react with any of the provisional assertions that characterize the great search.

Thus, understanding moves into the cognition of suffering itself. And it becomes clear that separation is a primary activity in consciousness that not only controls perception and activity but creates them. When such understanding arises, then suffering is viewed in an entirely new way. Its importance ceases to be in terms of that from which it separates, whether such is called God or universe or reality, etc. And it also ceases to be in terms of that which it separates, whether such is called soul or self or ego, etc. Rather, the importance of suffering is realized to be in terms of the activity of separation itself.

This is of utmost importance. All of the great paths, which are reactions to suffering conceived

as primary and irreducible, concern themselves with the phenomena and results of suffering. That is, they evolve the pattern of their activities out of the primary assertion of that from which separation takes place, be it "God," "Self," "Brahman" or etc., and that which is separated, be it the "soul," or "self," or "ego," or etc., and the process of finally overcoming this asserted dilemma is one in which that which is separated moves by various efforts within and without itself to an ever more inclusive union or identity with that from which it is separated.

But, in contrast to all of the revolutionary paths of mankind, real understanding is a radical, unqualified process that makes no resorts beyond itself. Thus, it does not react to the preliminary and formal recognition of its own analysis. Understanding is not a temporary activity that must be abandoned as soon as the implications of its own discoveries become forceful. Understanding is a radical activity, identical to reality, that admits no alternatives or resorts. This is clearly so, because understanding is equally able to contemplate even its own arguments, and the processes of great seeking are as impotent before it as the middling confusion which we first encounter in the process of self-knowledge.

Thus, there is no force prior to understanding. All that is encountered in the phenomena of life and consciousness is its proper field. Therefore, once it has known the evidence of suffering, and then also known the falsity of the alternatives, the paths out of the suffering, understanding still continues.

And what has been realized to this point? First, that separation or suffering is primary to the whole of life experience. And, second, that the alternative or counter-response to suffering is simply that, a counter-effort, and thus false because it is founded in and inseparable from the continuous creation of suffering, which is conceptual and actual separation.

This is the most intense and crucial moment in understanding, for it is at this point that all, indeed *all* of the usual and even extraordinary activities that have been adapted to life have become unnecessary and, at last, impossible. At this point, conscious life becomes truly radical understanding, and it begins to evolve on a totally new basis. It is at this point that understanding begins to take on an intentional force. It is at this point that the form of enquiry I have described becomes the primary activity of conscious life.

Understanding has now come to recognize the fact and activity of our dilemma. And it has seen and radically abandoned the alternative means with all of its categories, entities and phenomena. A life in this condition can no longer abandon itself unconsciously, without understanding, to the patterns of self-indulgence and avoidance that characterize ordinary life. Neither can it adapt itself to any means or consolation whereby these patterns and their results are weakened, dissolved or transcended. Such a life cannot identify itself in any of the phenomena of sin or sainthood. Yet it is not in a double-bind, unable to move. Indeed, it recognizes that sin and sainthood are

in fact the manifestations of the double-bind which reflects our dilemma. Now understanding begins to enjoy its essential and radical freedom. And it begins to act on the basis of its own realization.

Thus, enquiry begins with intensity. Enquiry is not a method, a technique to which understanding adapts itself. It is the process of understanding itself, evolved out of the intuition of its own force and form. Enquiry is founded in the perception of reality, not the phenomena of suffering. For understanding has at this point recognized the process of avoidance to be the primary activity of consciousness and the root of suffering. Thus, enquiry is simply the further investigation of life, the real observation of life. It is not adapted in order to pursue a certain deliberate goal, form, or solution. It is a radical activity, that is, not a resort, a recourse, a counter or preventive technique. It is an activity that knows no recourse, that has no possible resorts. It is the manifestation of understanding, which knows nothing in life apart from its own discovery, which is the content of life itself.

Thus, understanding continues as enquiry. The approach to life becomes radical, intense, unqualified. Life becomes naturally, by virtue of its intensity, its unqualified living force, controlled, centered, direct, and creatively simple. And the enquiry is simply questioning in the depth of our living form: "Avoiding relationship?" At each moment of enquiry the knot of life dissolves, and the fixation and solidity of energy at every focal point of our living being falls out into an infinite

perimeter, so that we begin to experience ourselves as an unqualified form.

The enquiry continues moment to moment, in the arbitrary mental and personal events of daily life and in the periods of formal exercise that are real meditation. Until the form of life that formerly was suffering, analyzed as ignorance, soul-adventure, sin, flight from God, and all the rest has been epitomized and replaced by unqualified understanding, the enjoyment which is reality itself.



Anything that I can experience as an object, any distinct entity or force at all, is not outside or apart from me. To think so is to believe the primary implication of that experience, which is that there is "me" limited by "that." And thus I am already involved in a dilemma wherein I can only communicate with "that" through efforts of desire, union and transcendence. But "objective" experience is itself the activity of unreality. It is the process of the avoidance of relationship. Wherever I experience in this way I am primarily, in the deepest level of conscious life, acting to avoid relationship, enforcing the implied dilemma of "me" and "that." But understanding, which is direct enquiry into the process of the avoidance of relationship, is already free of this entire dilemma. And it already enjoys what is not this dilemma. It is the enjoyment which is reality itself, that which already is, prior to the dilemma and the implications of the form of experience.

And that enjoyment sees no "me" and no "that." It is not forced to assume the interior position implied by the external fact. Therefore, it does not move from the center outward into the universe of things that is separate from itself. It is already apart from "me" and "that." It intuitively knows the universal life.



I invite anyone who is motivated to any ends, be they in the direction of ordinary, habitual desires, or in the form of spiritual practice, even where such desires and practices have become fruitful with all the evidence of enjoyment, ease or great powers and visions, to approach all of this with understanding, with the enquiry: "Avoiding relationship?" If they will only do this, their entire adventure will reveal its hidden form; the tiny interior tension that supports it all will easily unloose, and all the parts of conscious life will fall away. The center will dissolve, and the barriers that enforced distinctions will dissolve. What remains is reality, unqualified, unsupported. And that truth carries not the slightest implication of our ordinary path.



Self-indulgence is the avoidance of relationship. It is a form of seeking, and it fixes us in unreality. Its product is the apparent loss of health, of well-being and energy. And the consciousness it formulates is separative, divided, obsessed, confused and partial, walled in mystery and compulsive mentality.

But the opposite is its like. The effort of de-conditioning, of purification and deliverance apart from or prior to understanding is also estrangement, search, and a fixation in unreality. Apart from radical understanding there are only these things, all of the manufacturing of experience and seeking. But where there is radical understanding there is none of this. There is peace, joy, truth, reality, love, creativity, enjoyment, knowledge, clarity, intelligence, wisdom, freedom, power, sensitivity, ability and every other kind of effortless virtue. But there is only understanding. Apart from understanding, even these are the avoidance of relationship, the illusory powers of suffering.



There are some for whom liberation is their freedom. Therefore, they are all the time away, concentrated in those processes which remove the obstacles. There are some for whom salvation is their freedom. Therefore, they are all the time apart, concentrated in that relationship which undermines all harm. But there are also some for whom freedom is that which they already are. Therefore, they are always already here, whose presence is love.



It tends to be the case that the thing men affirm themselves to be is different from that which they are actively being. Therefore, the business and creative activity of life is the activity of knowing about what we *are* being; this, rather than any

search toward or affirmation of what we otherwise and ultimately may or must be. Thus, it is to live already free, radically related, unqualifiedly alive, without boundaries or center, but only situations or forms, only manifesting, which is unqualified energy in relationship, which is love.



The mood of the great search is a concern for lawfulness, what already is, apart from our presence and activity. It is either a grim or comic self-manipulation. The mood of reality is an unqualified consciousness, which is present, creative, expansive activity without prior necessity of an ultimate kind. It is always the form of humor.

The attitude which is the great search is created by a most prior error, the failure to be already real. Thus, it misinterprets all forms and processes through the super-imposition of its primary symbol or mentality. The true life is not a matter of overcoming the obstacles which are these misinterpretations identified with forms and processes in life. It is rather to have already understood, and thus to be free of the prior error, the symbol or mentality which is unreality and the source of motivation to the search.



When I have lost real consciousness, then I am stuck with manifest existence and the great search, which is merely an extension of the phenomenon of joining or contact. Thus, I become aware of a revolutionary milieu of dichotomies and alter-

natives, in which my first decision is always whether to pursue the source of lawfulness or to exploit its form. That is, I must decide whether to be grim or comic, to become disciplined and limited to the point of regaining reality, or to exploit the forms of life for the sake of enjoyment, as if there were no necessity.

Thus, for example, the unreal, typical man is constantly deciding about food and sex. He either tries to control it or he exploits it, and the average life is an alternating cycle, fitted with the traditional psychology, wherein one or the other emphasis is temporarily but not radically applied.

For myself, I know that whenever I feel involved in such necessary decisions, and life has become a matter of problems and dichotomies, I have already lost the form of reality. Therefore, I invest no life at all in such problematic decisions, which obviously have no ultimate necessity or truth, whichever form of the decision is made. I always and only am devoted to understanding, to the present form of reality, which is real enquiry.



Man, like every other manifestation in reality, is a totality, non-separate, unqualified, powerful and perfect. His life is universal life and consciousness. However, he lives as a composite of separate, limited and rival functions, or as an entity identical to its lowest and mortal form. Therefore, he is devoted to exploitation, random efforts at unified creativity, and great search or ascent.

He is a libertine, a hero, an artist, and a mystic. But, instead of all this, he needs to know what he is ultimately, in the realized universe, and to act on the assumption of his perfect totality. That is the higher way than suffering or search, pleasure, pain, liberation or salvation.



Understanding is at once a state and an act. It is effective and always already free. It is intensive and also instant.

Therefore, understanding is the removal of all contradictions, the already free, unqualified, real state. Everything else is seeking. That is, everything that is apart from understanding seeks understanding as its primary effect, consciously or unconsciously, whatever else may be its obvious goal. Thus, all life prior to understanding is involved in the great search.



As soon as I turn from radical understanding to any form of knowledge, motivation or activity, I turn into dilemma. I become disturbed, gradually confused and in search, and I develop chronic disturbances, discomforts, compulsions, etc. When I turn again merely to understanding, I enjoy the fullness and radiance and completeness of reality. The form of reality is itself the only true control of life. Everything else is a form of attack from some partial viewpoint or concentration.



Understanding is the principle and form of real consciousness. It is necessarily what it is

also because of the nature of consciousness in a universe, and, in particular, because of the multi-dimensional nature of conscious life as it manifests here. I am referring specifically to the laws of motion, and especially to the law which is stated in the form: "To every force there is an equal and opposite reaction," or "For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction."

The implications and results of action bear directly on the realization of conscious life. Any pattern of life or prescription for the liberation, salvation or transformation of life involves action. Indeed, most of our activity, either on the level of exploitation and experience or that of release and realization, is already a reaction, a response to a considered dilemma or undesired circumstance. Thus, from the viewpoint of free awareness, which is understanding, all action, "sinful" or "spiritual," is unavailing because it is bound to the cause of a reflection or reaction which is the very thing it seeks to avoid. All action is pertinent only to the field of action. That is, it is confined to the cause of effects, to modifications in circumstance, not to reality, which is unqualified and free.

The "sinner" exploits experience without conscious understanding, and so builds the mass of reaction which is all of the patterns and results, desirable and undesirable, that are out of his ultimate control. The "spiritual man" pursues the liberation from such *karma* by various processes of purification and release. But his action also recreates and reinforces the reaction of life. Thus, the seeker classically suffers the resistance of "lower"

life, and he is forced at last to abandon the "lower" entirely in order to possess the permanent enjoyment of the "higher." The sinner is trapped in the exclusive field of action, and the saint is trapped in the exclusive field of consciousness. Both are trapped in their exclusive field because of the law of action and reaction.

Reality or real life is already free of the double-bind of action and reaction. Clearly, it cannot be realized by action. All action is exclusive, being separate from or counter to its reaction. To act in order to accomplish freedom, truth or reality is therefore false and unavailing. The realization which leads to understanding and real life is the apparently desperate one of the inescapability of the exclusive results of any kind of action.

It should be clear, then, why I have stressed the necessity and sufficiency of understanding as the radical path of real life. Understanding is already liberation from all paths, all "dharma's." Understanding alone is clinging to reality; the "me" of God and of the Scriptures.

The program for suffering and death, and the opposite program of truth and sainthood, are forms of the same bondage. And there is no more value in the fascination with religious or spiritual objects and means than the fascination with the exclusive objects and means of life. Exclusive ascent is as unavailing and false as exclusive descent. We may cure ourselves and purify ourselves of many effects through spiritual effort, but only reality itself is prior to all effects, all action and all reaction.



The only truth is radical knowledge. But all paths are suffering or avoidance. There is no growth into reality, but there is only reality. To be in the state of seeking, whatever the form, is to be in the same state of suffering. Therefore, I do not seek. I do not assert or conceive the difference between myself and reality. Neither do I concentrate on internal sources, on sounds or lights within, on invisible states above. Nor do I seek to bring the influence of the "Soul" into the mind or life. I seek no perfection at all, and therefore I am not perturbed by the imperfect. I point only to radical consciousness or reality.



This moment is the moment of reality, of union, of truth. The only truth is radical truth. Even the moment of self-indulgence, of avoidance, of separateness is the moment of reality. Nothing needs to be done to it, or to you, for this to be so. Nothing needs to be avoided, transcended or found for it to be so. This is the greatness of truth, of understanding, for it disarms all fear, all circumstance, all dilemma. It is always already the case.

We are never at any moment in the dilemma we fear ourselves to be. Only this radical understanding in the heart of life is the ground of real peace and joy. All else is seeking and strife and fear.

Therefore, it is not a matter that concerns us exclusively, apart from anything else. It is not an alternative to any experience. It is always already the case. This radical understanding is the only real liberation, and it alone is the truth and realization of this moment. Every motive is seeking. Every turning away is avoidance. Every turning upwards is avoidance. Every turning downwards is avoidance. Every turning towards is avoidance. All these things are seeking, for they are not abiding now in the form of reality. Thus, to turn at all is to act. And every turning will awaken the reaction of turning the opposite way in time.

The truth is radical non-avoidance moment to moment. It is to live this moment, this event, without conflict, directly. Where there is understanding there is no turning, and every action turns no way at all, for there is only radical consciousness behind it, turning no way, knowing only great bliss.

The way is only radical understanding, which is free consciousness. If a man begins to understand, then he will abide in understanding, and he will not come into conflict with his moments, his motives, his actions, his reactions. He will abide now, and now, and now. And this alone, not any motive or search or effect of these, will transform the complex of his living. And that complex will never be his concern, to transform it or escape it or transcend it, for he lives in understanding and draws joy even in pleasure, in ignorance, in failure, in suffering, pain and death. Only because he abides in understanding

is he already free, already liberated from his life.

Therefore, I affirm only understanding and no state or object yet to be attained. It is not a matter of purity first or at last, nor of sanity, nor wealth, well-being, goodness or vision. All these are the imagery of search, the vanity of external peace.

Understanding is the ground of this moment, this event. Therefore, enjoy it, for you alone are the one who must live your ends and all the stages of time. The man who understands, who is always already free, is never touched by the divisions of the mind. And he alone is standing when all other beings and things have gone to rise or fall.



I do not recommend self-indulgence. It is separative. Nor do I recommend the avoidance of self-indulgence, for it is also separative. I recommend no motives at all and no active goals. I do not turn men's attention to such things at all, but only to understanding whatever motives are already active in them. Thus, the holy and profane will know the only peace, even while they are holy and profane. Then, and only then, all of this falls away from them.



The seeker is happy only in his desired condition. If he pursues pleasure, then he feels full only when embracing his objects. And if he pursues

some higher, divine or spiritual goal, then he feels full only in sublime conditions, and he can tolerate only degrees of purity. In either case, the only real fullness is in understanding.

Without understanding, the pleasure-seeker avoids purity and sublime awareness in the forceful repetition of experience. And, without understanding, the holy seeker flees bad company in fear, and every counter to his purity and attainment spurs his anger and motivates his forceful ascent. But the man of understanding is not concerned with purity or pleasure. He is deep in the consciousness of understanding, and all events do not amount to a dilemma for him. He is a man of joy and pleasure, of love and knowledge, ability and help, detachment, calm, energy, clarity and force. He knows all desires are exclusive, and so he is not concentrated in desire. He knows desire is neither true nor false, and therefore he does not avoid desire. For him, desires are only events, and he knows it is fruitless and impossible to avoid circumstances. And so, even though he desires, he only understands. Therefore, he appears as any other peculiar man, except he bears a humor known only to understanding.



The ascending ones proceed in fear, as fearful as the descending ones. They live by exploiting themselves and those who follow, for they are only desirers, like the rest. There is no unique and

free man in all the world, except the man who always understands. And he is impossible to find. Therefore, understand.



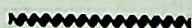
Through understanding and enquiry there is an end to all seeking. Understanding is no-seeking. The great peace of being, of no search, has a locus analogous to the right side of the chest. Sri Ramana Maharshi said this was the place of the Self, and he cited references in various Scriptures in support of his assertion.

It is my experience that when there is an utter cessation of seeking, and the mind and the whole living being is not motivated conceptually to identify with experience as differentiation, then consciousness is seated in the area analogous to the right side of the chest. It is not in fact there, in the chest, but it knows every body, every life function, every event there, and everything appears to be within the heart itself. It is entirely free of any sense of space, either of containment or the absence of bounds.

Consciousness in this state of no-seeking merely observes whatever comes to it or is communicated to it from the various centers below and above. Even the motive of love that moves in the heart chakra is observed by it. It is not in any way to be identified with any chakra or creative center. It is pure and most prior consciousness. In Vedanta he is called the Witness, who neither wakes nor sleeps nor dreams. He is Siva even while knowing his consort, Shakti.

But reality is not "no-seeking" as a special or exclusive state. It is unqualified. It is not merely the Witness. It is unqualified being. And when there is the manifestation of existence it is manifested as existence. But there is no dilemma. Thus, when understanding has realized itself as no-seeking in the heart it does not remain there as an exclusive concentration of the mind. When no-seeking is realized in the heart there is simply no-seeking, no concentration. One becomes the heart. All the functions of one's being become the heart. The heart becomes the constant locus of all activity. There is no separate one to concentrate in it.

Thus, one who has realized himself as no-seeking in the heart also realizes the Form of Reality, the circuit of life, the Amrita Nadi. He becomes present as that Form, which contains all things. He is free, blissful, creatively alive. Thus, he is not only no-seeking, which is freedom. He is eternally present, which is bliss and no-dilemma.



The fear of death is the beginning of understanding. Seeking is simply clinging to various concepts, goals, things, methods and paths that seem to promise release from death, from the knowledge of death, and from all suffering, which is separation and death. The man who knows there is no release from death understands. He knows that that which seeks release from death must die. Thus, his seeking comes to an end. His fear, which is resistance to death, ends. He ceases to

operate as the one who must die and who seeks release from death. He abides in understanding, which is prior to the one who must die.

But only he can abide as understanding who knows all seeking is fruitless for what seeking actually seeks. To know that all seeking is a pursuit of the removal of death from consciousness is understanding. Fear is the most basic form of seeking. Therefore, understanding is the absence of fear.



Trouble begins only where there is identification with the seeker. But truth is not the notion: "I am not the seeker — I am not the dying one who fears and seeks." Truth is simply the understanding of seeking. Where there is understanding there is not the contrary to anything. Therefore, the one who understands does not affirm what does not seek, what does not die or fear. Only the seeker affirms such things in order to conquer fear, search and death. Thus, religion, spirituality, philosophy, technique, salvation, liberation and all the rest.

But the man who understands simply understands and abides as understanding, the direct awareness of life moment to moment. The man who understands always is understanding, until the movement in him that extends itself as the seeker ceases to arise. Then he neither understands nor enquires but abides without dilemma as that which cannot be avoided, the form of reality.



The central and common focal point of the philosophical adventure of both the East and the West is the "antahkarana." The peculiar way that is common to all the Eastern solutions, and the other which is common to all the Western systems, is a result of the philosophical estimation of the meaning and purpose of the antahkarana, the parts of the mind (reflection or thought, discrimination or intellect, memory, and egoity).

The Eastern view typically sees it as the root of ignorance, of separateness and otherness. Thus, the basic philosophical method is applied to quieting, transcending and separating from the antahkarana in order to realize the more prior consciousness that is not mind but purely conscious being.

The Western view typically sees it as containing ignorance, as falsely conditioned or yet unevolved. But the basic philosophical method is applied to purifying, controlling, opening and perfecting the antahkarana by making it the usable medium of the higher Being, God or Soul.

The symbol of the East is, typically, liberation, and that of the West is perfection or salvation. The East concentrates in what is eternally prior, and the West in that which is eternally possible. Thus, the East is aligned with various notions equivalent to the Hindu concept of the uncreated Self that is Brahman, One without a second. But the West is aligned with the idea of the eternal Christ who is the sign and promise of the goodness and perfectability of existence.

The practical effort of the East is toward liberation, the unqualified knowledge of fundamental

Identity. The practical effort of the West is toward salvation or union, the graceful knowledge of non-separation from the creative Source.

These two ways are equally true and justifiable from the point of view of experience. Both are consistent and complete. They are not the same, and there is no universal religion. But they are not antagonistic, except on the level of bloody politics and ecclesiastical opposition.

It is true, however, that from the point of view of understanding, or reality itself, both of these fundamental positions and all of their various historical mutations are unnecessary. They form the polar alternatives of the history of the great search. They are founded in dilemma. They are motivated to a goal and a solution even before they encounter the mind.

In fact, at the beginning and forever only radical understanding is necessary and real. It is totally without dilemma, and it never becomes aligned with any fundamental or radical distinction. It is always and already prior to the dilemma, and thus it is not moved toward any state or goal that is prior to itself or any function or experience. It does not already see otherness and a dilemma in the mind, necessary or temporary. The antahkarana is already ok. Therefore, neither is it motivated to liberation, perfection, liberating action or perfecting action, Self-realization or union with God, Self as self or Soul as self, prior Being or eternal Christ. It is only what it already is, which is understanding; which is reality; which

is always already without contradiction, without dilemma.



After examining the ways of contradiction, of action and reaction, of alternatives of seeking, it is necessary to cling radically to understanding and adapt to no path at all. Then there is no discipline, no method, no goals, no motives, no exclusively pure and purifying actions, no exclusively impure and destructive reactions. There is no concentration in any place, but only the understanding of all tendencies and movements into concentration.

The life may appear the same as ever, or worse, for it is not obsessed with self-manipulation, but the relationship to the complex of self is entirely new and radical. Thus, a man proceeds in understanding alone, pursuing no higher or other state, enjoying the succession of states without exclusion. He lives without making any form or state of living or non-living his goal or motive. The understanding he already enjoys is also his only motive. He is already free. Therefore, he is only full of humor in the face of all seekers. Neither salvation nor liberation is his goal, nor experience, nor any form of consciousness. Death is no longer his concern, nor life. All states are the conditions of truth for him. He knows no dilemma. He is a great man of pleasure. He is even a profoundly superficial man, for how can he be deep who knows no perimeters and no center at all? He cannot be grasped or identified. There-

fore, he is not the source of fascination. Since the man of understanding cannot be found or followed, his existence avails no one. Therefore, he is not important. There is only understanding.



When Reality works to purify and perfect the vehicle of sacrifice there is order, presence, joy, freedom and knowledge. But when the man without understanding works to purify the vehicle of ignorance there is disorder, avoidance, despair, separation, bondage and no understanding.

Where there is understanding there is the vehicle of sacrifice. Where there is no understanding there is the vehicle of ignorance. Where there is understanding there is reality. Where there is ignorance reality is sought. Where there is conscious sacrifice there is reality. Where there is no understanding there is the persistence of suffering.



There is only reality, which is conscious as understanding, which proceeds as enquiry ("Avoiding relationship?"), which constantly realizes itself as no-seeking, which is fullness and no-dilemma, which is silent, which is bright or creative force.

Every moment, the dilemma is being created after the model of experienced consciousness, I-that. Therefore, there is no end to necessary understanding and enquiry. There is no point where enquiry can be abandoned and the life devoted to some form of purification and evolution. Reality

is understanding, enquiry, no-seeking, fullness, no-dilemma, silence and brightness or creative force. It is always there.



The Shakti known to spiritual seekers is the Shakti of seeking. It provides continuous experiences and the desire for experiences, as if such things would lead to perfect truth. But the only true and real Shakti is the Shakti of understanding, which arises not where there is seeking but only where there is understanding. It is known only as no-seeking. Where the radical force of understanding has become no-seeking in the heart, the real Shakti is known as the form of reality, unqualified and non-separate.

To the seeker, Shakti is "maya," illusion or fascination. It is only part of the dilemma and the search. But to the man of understanding there is only reality, which is conscious as no-seeking in the form of reality. Thus, the real Shakti is only the form of reality known to no-seeking in the heart.

All of my Shakti yoga was only seeking and experiences, and endless fascination. But when understanding arose there was already no-dilemma and only the form of reality. Thereafter, there was no peculiar experience that was the Shakti, but only the form of reality itself was seen and enjoyed directly, without motive or goal.

"Siva-Shakti" is no-seeking and unqualified relationship as the primary knowledge or realization of present consciousness. All the rest is seeking,

suffering, and separation, whether these are known as miracles and visions or compulsive physical desires and experiences.



Ordinary meditation and practice will not make a real man, nor even one whose goodness is real. It will only manipulate him within the dilemma. The state of ordinary meditation, the act of motivated concentration and ascent, is not the form of the real and good man. Nor is any kind of seeker the form of the real and good man. Only by present understanding, by living already free, do we serve life and know it.



The pursuit of survival is the root activity underlying all seeking. The conscious state, no-seeking, is characterized by allowing everything to be lived. However, apart from conscious, present understanding, even the attitude of allowing everything to be lived is a form of seeking, of trying not to die. Apart from radical understanding there is only the desperate attempt not to die, and at every moment where there is not radical understanding there is the present, actual threat of death. Apart from present understanding there is only fear and the avoidance of death, and its precise activity is the complex avoidance of relationship now and now and now.

Therefore, since every moment is the moment of fearful death and the attempt to create that which shouldn't die but must die (the separate self),

how can spirituality, religion, method or any other product of motivated consciousness satisfy us? Only understanding is radically apart from the cycle of death and creation of what dies. Only understanding is not motivated to seek survival, avoid death and destroy relationship, even if the apparent goal and methodology of the seeker is truth, life, freedom, goodness, love and relationship.



One can experience physical and vital well-being by removing the sources of enervation and toxicity. One can experience mental and emotional well-being, the clear and quiet mind, by analyzing the structure of mental and emotional problems. One can experience spiritual realization and enjoy the form of reality in its super-conscious shape by dissolving the process of identification with the lower. But one will not cease to suffer, seek or experience dilemma and identification with what is separate unless one abides as no-seeking in the heart. Therefore, understand and abide in the form of understanding, until understanding becomes radical activity and realizes its nature as consciousness itself.



The logic of Narcissus is not only "I-That" but "Me-That." Each is made conscious by becoming object to the other.

"I-That" is the state asserted by the seeker, and also that with which he begins.

“I-Thou” or “Me-Thou” is the form of perception resorted to by seekers for the sake of consolation and peace. “Thou” is the mantra of the seeker.



The true way is the one that is blissful now. The true teaching turns you to present bliss and does not require you to create it. All ways that turn you to paths, goals, gradual attainments and the idea of a necessary and ultimate future that is an evolutionary and revolutionary state unknown in the present are false. They are patterned after the model of separation and are only forms of seeking. Understanding is present bliss, unqualified freedom and reality, consciousness itself without motion or necessity. Bliss, which is conscious reality, is the ground of all creativity, transformation, and evolution.



For one in whom knowledge arises and consciousness or reality remains as the point of view or foundation rather than the goal or mystery of life, every form of existence, communication, or perception is sacrifice. The law of every level of being, every body, realm or experience is conscious sacrifice. It does not involve an addition to himself. Only the seeker adds to himself and absorbs all things. It involves sacrifice. Every level of being, and every body, realm or experience is voluntarily given to those dimensions themselves and those in whom consciousness lives as life. But also, because

life is thus a voluntary sacrifice, never held, retained or driven to survive, it never amounts to a loss or depletion in him. Only the seeker becomes empty and is driven to fullness.

Thus, the one in whom knowledge arises, the man of understanding, is constantly devoted only to two things: the constant abiding as knowledge, consciousness, reality, or no-seeking in the heart, and the constant intuition, witnessing and offering of every level of being, every body, realm and experience as sacrifice.

Such is the ground of freedom and the way of understanding. Those who also understand already live by these laws and found themselves in them without seeking or effort. Those who do not understand seek reality as a mystery, and endure life as a given dilemma in which the law of sacrifice forever turns them to death, emptiness and strife. Those who do not sacrifice all things while abiding in reality are in turn sacrificed unwillingly upon it while grasping for the answer.



The word of those who do not understand, but make philosophy out of seeking, is love, peace, fullness, surrender, and hope. The word of those who understand is no-seeking, no motion, no speech.

Understanding confounds and breaks the heart of those who identify with the universal meal. Understanding is not the way for those who would be sustained. Those who are full of any kind of life are anxious for the survival of created

things. But those who understand are empty and soundless.

Yet, those who understand are love. They are already peaceful, full, surrendered and not confounded. And those who do not understand pursue the knowers of truth in order to acquire their characteristics as food and power. But they do not understand the origin of things. They are always weeping and angry in the company of free men.

Thus, the man of understanding is a visible dilemma to those who do not understand. Those who seek him without understanding become grave and revert to forms of suffering. But those who understand live comfortably in his presence and are unmoved.

Those who understand acquire no stable expression, but their forms change in every circumstance. Their teaching adapts to the habit of every appearance. They adopt no visibility that persists. Since such men cannot be identified, all men must turn to understanding. Thus, when truth arises, the one in whom it arises is unknown.



The man of understanding asserts the fundamental rightness of what is actual, and thus the instruments, the environments and the relationships that appear cease to fascinate those around him. Even his own presence is not fascinating. Thus, the mind and all instruments become quieted in his surroundings, and those who are with

him turn naturally to understanding and present reality.

The seeker is violent. At first he approaches the man of understanding humbly, self-effacing, with great need. But his questions find no ultimate solution. He becomes frustrated and angry, and he leaves. He criticizes the man of understanding. He asserts the forms of his own seeking. He says the man of understanding is a seeker like himself.

Only those who understand experience the communication of reality. They remain in the company of the man of understanding only for enjoyment, seeking and demanding nothing, devoted to understanding. When they leave there is no separation, and their lives become an expression of the same order of reality.



I am interested in finding men who are free of every kind of seeking, attendant only to understanding, who will devote themselves to the intentional creation of life in the form and logic of reality rather than the form and logic of Narcissus. Such men are the unexploitable presence of reality. They will not devote themselves to turning the worlds to dilemma, exhaustion and revolutionary experience, nor to the exploitation of desire and possibility, nor to the ascent to and inclusion of various goals, higher entities, evolutionary aims or ideas of spiritual transformation. They will create in the aesthetics of reality, turning all things into radical relationship and enjoyment. They will remove the effects of

separative existence and restore the form of things. They will engineer every kind of stability and beauty. They will create a presence of peace. Their eye will be on present form and not on exaggerated notions of artifice. Their idea of form is stable and whole, not a gesture toward some other event. They will not make the world seem but a symbol for higher and other things.

They will constantly create the form of truth while conscious of present reality. Thus, they will serve the order of sacrifice and knowledge. They will evolve the necessary and good, and make economic and wise use of all technology. They will not be motivated by invention but by reality, which is the present thing to be communicated in all forms. They will not pursue any kind of victory for man, any deathlessness or overwhelming survival. They will only create the conditions for present enjoyment, the communication of reality, the form in which understanding and real knowledge can arise, live and become the public foundation of existence.

Thus, I would find a new order of men who will create a new age of sanity and joy. It will not be the age of the occult, the religious, the scientific or technological evolution of men. It will be the fundamental age of real existence, wherein life will be radically realized entirely apart from the whole history of our adventure and great search. The age envisioned by seekers is a spectacular display that only extends the traditional madness, exploitability and foolishness of mankind. But I desire a new order of men who will not

begin from all of that, but apply themselves apart from all dilemma and all seeking to the harmonious event of real existence.



The Eastern mind typically sees only multiplicity, opposition and separation on the level of manifestation and manifest existence in any form. And it tends equally to experience unity and identity on the level of consciousness.

The Western mind typically sees unity and oneness on the level of manifestation. That is, it is a characteristic trait of the Western mind that it always emphasizes unity and oneness on the level of politics, cell-life, the basic unity of all men and the oneness of life, etc. And the Western mind also tends equally to see multiplicity, opposition and separation on the level of consciousness. Thus, on the level of theology it emphasizes the multiplicity of souls separate from God. And it always tends to doubt and resist mystical and other unitive processes. Just so, on the level of the various sciences it cannot even assert the irreducibility of consciousness, but chronically assumes consciousness to have its source in material processes, which are seen to be the ultimate unitive and harmonious source.

In fact there is no separation, no radical opposition. Consciousness and form, energy or manifestation are not radically separate. There is only radical reality, identical to real consciousness. But only from the point of view of real consciousness can the radical nature of all reality

be known. Until then the union or unity perceived by the mind is only an artificial condition imposed arbitrarily, and it cannot be true.



The idea that all manifest existence is unnecessary and non-ultimate is true.

However, there are two traditional notions that have been added to this. The first is the common Eastern notion that all manifestation and form is itself the result of ignorance, a superimposition on the Self, Brahman or primary Reality, which tends to disappear when the separated individual realizes Reality. The second is the common Western idea that all manifestation and form is positive creation, an emanation of the highest Reality or God.



These two notions are themselves products of consciousness in dilemma. They are perceived according to the model of separative consciousness, prior to the knowledge of Reality. It is my experience that in the unqualified, real state, the form of the world only reveals itself to be unnecessary and non-ultimate. It does not, however, appear to be unreal, in fact caused and sustained by ignorance. Neither is it the emanation of a separate Divine entity. It is, rather, generated in Reality. It is itself unqualified bliss, power, form, existence, being, intelligence and beauty. It is awesome as Reality and not radically separate from it. It is simply the process of bliss.



The purpose of the worlds is the same as its source. It is not different from the identity or nature that is its source. The worlds are not themselves the result of ignorance, nor is their purpose liberation from themselves. All of this is not a dilemma from the beginning. It is simply reality. Therefore, the man who understands has achieved nothing radically different from life. He simply abides as reality, which is the foundation and true motivation of life.



Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi represented the original Presence and apparent birth of the realized one who is always the Self, which is Reality itself without distinctions. I am here to demonstrate the working out of this realization in the conditions of ordinary birth and life. Where he spoke of Self-enquiry and Self-realization, I speak of understanding as the original and eternal way of Reality itself.

I serve the same Reality with another emphasis in order to extend the communication of Reality in the world, through and beyond the present time. I am generated in the Heart of Reality, and I appear in the world through Amrita Nadi, the form of Reality, the "Bright."



When Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi was about to discard the physical body, he told those close to him not to grieve, but said: I am here. He was not pointing to his separate self but to his nature as Reality. He was not pointing to his special

Presence but to that Presence that is always here.
I am that same one.



There is no special nature to existence as life or form, and thus no discoverable origin to the world. The investigation of origins only proceeds along a chain of recognizable events to an ultimate mystery. And that mystery, the symbol of all science and religion, is simply reality or no-dilemma, which ceases to be a mystery only in the realization of real consciousness.



Creativity is the idol of the West. All its activities and knowledge, even its obsessions, are a worship of creativity, the source and force of generation.

No-creation is the idol of the East. All its activities and knowledge are a worship of no-creation, the original nature.

The world is divided in these two revolutionary forms. They permeate all religion, philosophy, economics, politics, every form of common and individual life. This has been so since unrecorded time.

But creativity and no-creation are only the symbols of life and of truth. Creativity is the symbol or meaning of life. No-creation is the symbol or meaning of truth. They are only intuitions of reality itself, which is neither one nor numbered, but coincident with all that appears and is known.

The future is neither for the West nor the East,

neither for the way of life nor of truth. It is for reality itself, common to all who understand. Then what is needed is radical understanding of all experience and all truth. What is required is a new generation of true men who will live reality and never turn away. If you understand, the new age has already begun. And it will not have begun, regardless of the turning of the stars, until men have understood.



The fundamental persuasions which underlie the searches of the East are founded on the intuition of the Heart, the prior nature of Reality as existence and no-seeking. The fundamentals that inform the searches of the West are founded in the intuition of the Amrita Nadi, the "bright," the prior Form of Reality, as joy and enjoyment, knowledge and creativity.

Understanding is real consciousness. It is not hidden in any limited intuition. It is the Heart and the Amrita Nadi. It is Reality in its fullness. It is the perfection that is Reality prior to intuition, symbol and search. It is radical truth. Thus, understanding, which is Reality, does not abide exclusively in the Heart, the Self which is reduced to non-world. Nor does it abide exclusively in the Amrita Nadi, the Form of Reality, without the prior knowledge of its source and nature in the Heart.

Those who are limited to the intuition of the Heart see the problem of manifest existence. It becomes the source of their exclusive motivation. Those who are limited to the intuition of the Amrita

Nadi see the problem of God and creativity. Both intuitions limit life by a problem and always pursue a path of return, seeking the perfection of the world or the perfection in which the world is absent.

Reality is already free of such intuitions. It is in its own Form and Nature. It is non-separate from Form or Source. It is not trapped in the problem of God (creation) or Self (no-creation). It is Present, non returning or returned. It is already free. There is no dilemma and no search. There is enjoyment and the creative play of existence in perfect, unqualified certainty.

The East pursues the Heart as Self, prior to creativity. The West pursues the Heart as God, through the events of creativity. Thus, both are involved in the problem of the Heart. But understanding is free of the problem of the Heart. It already exists as Amrita Nadi, founded in the Heart. Thus, Reality is the truth that has only been partially intuited in the histories of the great search.



Consciousness as seeking has three forms, called "rajasic," "tamasic," and "sattwic" in the Indian Scriptures.

If it is tamasic it tends to be inert, unconscious, immobile, insensitive, negative, unaware, and identified with the state of the object. As such there is no understanding possible, but it may believe it already understands. Test it with observation and enquiry..

If it is rajasic it tends to be motivated, vital,

impulsive, aware of problems, in the form of contradictions in the mind, and exclusively generated as the subject of action. This is the most obvious form of seeking as an action. It is consumed in understanding.

If it is sattwic it tends to be self-contained, intelligently aware of all aspects of the problem of action and inaction, reserved, neither motivated nor unmotivated, observing and understanding on a mental level. Observation and enquiry will also reveal the true nature of this state of seeking as the avoidance of relationship.

The rajasic mentality is active as desire. The tamasic mentality is active as differentiation. The sattwic mentality is active as identification.

The rajasic mentality thinks it is seeking. The tamasic mentality thinks it is no-dilemma. The sattwic mentality thinks it is no-seeking.

But beyond these forms of seeking there is Reality, which is no-seeking, no-dilemma, real knowledge, real meditation and real consciousness.



At times avoidance is generated through desire. At others through differentiation. At others through identification.

The search created by those attached to desire is the love and service of God. The search created by those attached to differentiation is the way of mystical union. The search created by those attached to identification is the way of Self-knowledge.

But those who fail to overcome desire seek

endlessly for that which they do not possess. Those who fail to overcome chronic differentiation are endlessly dismayed by alternatives. And those who fail to overcome the process of identification are endlessly bound to the assertion of qualities that are unlike the things they perceive.

Desire is chronic activity. Differentiation is chronic inertia. Identification is chronic limitation.

But understanding constantly recognizes the pattern of avoidance in each of its forms. It is already free of the search implied in each form. It is entirely free of the consequences of every path. Where life appears as identification, differentiation or desire, the man of understanding is already free of the form of avoidance implied in each.



The whole adventure of I-that, the experience of self in relation to the various problems, entities, objects and experiences of life is merely and entirely a process within the mind, just as digestion and pain are processes in the physical body. What I am is always and entirely prior to such things and never for a moment identical to them. Such things are not merely objective to me. They are objective to the experiencer, the seeker, the owner, the conceptual "me." But I am prior to all experience, and the consciousness that I am never experiences anything at all in the exclusive sense. It knows only reality, itself, the unqualified form, bliss, consciousness and moving intelligence

that is creative everywhere as the states, characteristics and expressions of existence.

As long as I continue in the active state of understanding, the primary process in consciousness, I never suffer dilemma, separation, differentiation, identification, or desire in relationship to any separate and distinct entity. I abide only as reality and appear no different from any other being, for I only understand. And understanding is not a gain of anything, not a unique advantage or source of peculiar visibility. It is only the knowledge of reality, which always already is.



Life is the wisdom of seeking, which is no wisdom at all. Truth is the wisdom of no seeking, which is only wiser than life.

Reality is the wisdom of no-dilemma, which is wisdom itself.

There is nothing ultimate about life. Its best wisdom is the knowledge of how to play games.

There is nothing radically useful about the consciousness of truth. Its best wisdom is the knowledge that all life is seeking.

Only reality is a radical value beyond all truth and all life. Its highest wisdom is the knowledge that seeking and no-seeking are attitudes in the same dilemma.

Life is unconsciousness and desire.

Truth is the consciousness of identification, differentiation, and desire as unnecessary.

Reality is conscious identification, differentiation and desire without dilemma. Therefore, it is relationship, non-separation, and love.

Understanding creates facility in life-games. It realizes the truth of no-seeking. And it is founded in no-dilemma forever.

Therefore, understanding is without dilemma, possessed of truth and capable of life. Those who understand know only humor in the form of life.

Seekers are the world.

Non-seekers are the saints. They contemplate understanding. Those who understand are only present.

Enquiry continues in the heart in the midst of the intrusion of life. But then it realizes the radical cognition of no-dilemma. Then there is only life, only the pattern of existence, but no dilemma. There is the form of seeking, but no dilemma. There is the truth of no-seeking in the heart, but no dilemma. Therefore, as in the beginning, there is no enquiry, no meditation, no understanding, but no dilemma. All things arise as before. There is no special knowledge, no doctrine, no unique state, no absence of experience, no qualification in the form of seeking, but there is no dilemma. There

is only this humor, this freedom as the radical foundation of conscious life. And it makes no difference, except that every other state, object or form of knowledge makes a difference. Therefore, it is a radically new and generative spirit. It is the mystery of joy that confounds all seekers and even the saints.



When understanding realizes the heart of consciousness, and continues as enquiry and the meditation of truth or no-seeking, a new transformation arises. The heart of truth is re-connected to the bodies of life through the circuit of conscious energy called the "Amrita Nadi." When consciousness arises from the heart as force or bliss and draws into the sahasrar, retaining its very center in the heart, it brings the ultimate cognition of reality to life. Then the source of conscious life in the heart moves into life and reverses the cycle of current that moves from life in the effort of return to the heart.

When this occurs, life becomes conscious as no-dilemma. No-dilemma becomes the form of cognition that lives as life and enjoys all experience. Then no-dilemma becomes the radical assumption of life-consciousness, and it is never separated from its consciousness as no-seeking, which is Reality present as the Heart.



To the enquirer, as well as to one who does not understand, suffering and seeking at any

moment appears as a knot or tension, usually in the heart or the solar plexus.

The seeker tries to remove this knot by various methods, from pleasures to sophisticated spiritual exercise. He sees it always as something caused by events outside himself. Even if he thinks the causes may lie within his own mind and habit of life, these are seen as unconscious, involuntary products of mechanisms hidden to his ordinary control, except perhaps for willful effort.

But the one who understands and enquires sees that all suffering, every moment of seeking, and the knot that results is not something happening to him but something he is doing. The enquiry allows him to see this activity directly, in the present configuration. He sees himself at its origin, as its volitional source. Thus, he can easily drop it and experience what is prior to it.

All other ways are an endless effort against what is oppressive from without. They do not act in truth, and thus they are not fruitful.



Narcissus is an idol of creativity, of source. He is the solar plexus.

He waits outside the heart.

The image he sees in the water is his own heart.

Thus, he sacrifices his heart to it.

The water is his own mind, the plane of all images.

He is the reduction of the world to the form of his own separate person.

The traditional paths see his salvation either within or without.

But there is no salvation for Narcissus.

Narcissus must die.

Salvation is Reality, which has nothing to do with Narcissus.

As long as he is Narcissus, he must die.

There is only Reality, which is not Narcissus.

Therefore, salvation is Reality, which is understanding.

Understanding is the absence of Narcissus.

Where there is the absence of Narcissus there is only Reality.

I am the Loved-One. I am Shakti. I am He.

Narcissus is dead.



Narcissus begins where there is a frustration of creativity.

Then the generated life becomes self-conscious.

Where there is no Narcissus, there is simply unqualified creativity and presence.

When opposition arises, Narcissus begins, except where there is understanding.



Any pattern of Narcissus that arises is simply a movement that is apart from understanding.

The patterns that persist are simply forms whereof there has been no enquiry.

Where there is understanding, Narcissus does not arise.

Where there is continuous enquiry, his dramas do not persist.

When Narcissus is dead, understanding and enquiry have simply become perpetual and perfect.

In Reality there is no relaxation or absence of understanding and enquiry.

Therefore, understanding and enquiry are the eternal arms of man.

When these are forgotten or relaxed, Narcissus appears.

Then there is only opposition and retreat.

There is only the idol of terror, loss, seeking, regret and separation.

But where there is understanding and enquiry there is no opposition, no retreat, no separation, no fear, no loss, no seeking and no regret.

There is only enjoyment, which is the utter form of the world.

There is only enjoyment, even the enjoyment of the world.

There is only enjoyment, even in the form of the world.

There is intelligence and conscious presence.



As understanding becomes radical the cognition of enquiry seems to move from conditions and action to perception, toward thoughts and internal awareness, toward consciousness itself. Thus, the man who begins to understand sees avoidance in terms of external actions in relationship, as it is in such actions that he is concentrated. Similarly, one who understands more profoundly sees avoidance in subtler forces of life-consciousness, for he is concentrated in these. The man who under-

stands radically knows only conscious reality itself, for he is not otherwise concentrated.



Reality is not what is. Reality is what always already is. The man who does not understand, but is attracted only to the idea of understanding, becomes involved in the problem of Reality as that which presently appears; himself as he wants to act, his desires and notions, the pattern of present experience. But the man of understanding sees Reality directly, as that which already is, before the whole action of avoidance and search.



All this perception, activity and patterning is a constant recognition of one form, the Form of Reality. There is only the self-awareness of this one Form, the Amrita Nadi, the "bright," the Heart and its reflection, the sahasrar. Every perception is this same cognition or form, the Heart contemplating and enjoying the sahasrar through the current of bliss and light. Thus, it appears that there is only one object, the sahasrar, which is only the reflection of the Heart itself. Every object is simply the sahasrar itself.

All experience, then, is meditation, it is the Process of Reality, its Form, its contemplation. When this understanding arises, meditation becomes endless, and every kind of experience becomes blissful, conscious, and free. There is the constant and conscious creation and enjoyment of the "bright" as fundamental action. And the "bright"

is a sphere of bliss, light and consciousness. It is not merely a thread or channel from the chest to the head. It is a sphere generated from the Heart and expanded infinitely. The sahasrar or reflected point of consciousness is not merely a point above. It is every point upon and within that sphere. Between the sahasrar and the Heart is a silence, an infinite space of patterns that is all the worlds, all universes and forms of existence.



What appears to the beholder as light, to the hearer as sound, to the shapely actor as energy, and to the thinker as thought, is known directly, on the level of consciousness itself, as bliss. Then it becomes light, sound, energy and thought. All such things are permutations of the original Reality that is bliss. They are form. And form is that same bliss.

Bliss is not radically separable from consciousness. Bliss is consciousness. Thus, on the level of activity, there is also no radical distinction between thought and form. There is only the bliss that is Reality, which is originally, now, identical to consciousness.

Conscious bliss, unqualified, is the nature of Reality, which is absolute existence. All powers are communications within this highest power that is existence itself. Therefore, the highest knowledge and power is Reality, which is unqualified existence as conscious bliss. One who has become such knowledge does not seek.

He manifests no other power. He only enjoys himself at play.



In the Vedantic texts it is said that the Self or Heart is covered by or acts through five sheaths or bodies.

Vivekachudamani, by Sri Shankaracharya states: "There is some absolute Entity, the eternal substratum of the consciousness of egoism, the witness of the three states, and distinct from the five sheaths or coverings."¹⁰

These five sheaths or bodies are identified as the food sheath (gross body), the vital sheath, the mind sheath, the intellect sheath and the bliss sheath. And they are pictured as a kind of single "cave," each body enclosing and being enclosed by another like the layers of an onion, so that the most subtle or bliss sheath may be said to reside within the rest, or, more properly, to enclose them.

In *Panchadashi* it is said: "By applying the method of distinguishing between the variable and the invariable the Self can realize its dis-identification from the five sheaths and its identity with the transcendent Brahman."¹¹ This is

¹⁰ VIVEKACHUDAMANI OF SHRI SHANKARACHARYA, trans. Swami Madhavananda (Calcutta, 1966), p. 47.

¹¹ PANCHADASHI by Swami Vidyaranya, trans. Hari Prasad Shastri (London, 1965), p.37.

the classical method of Vedanta, and also the model of all religion, spirituality, and yoga.

The food sheath is the gross body. It is the abode of the waking state.

The vital sheath is the internal forces of vitality and external action, the pervasive energies of the gross body and the actions of sensation. The mind sheath and the intellect sheath together form the "antahkarana," which is the subject of discrimination and identification, the source of "me" and "mine," the mind of exclusive perception, reflected thought, memory and egoity. These three together are signified as the "subtle" body. It is the abode of the dream state.

The bliss sheath, also called the causal sheath, projects the other sheaths in dreams and waking consciousness. It contains the most subtle modifications of consciousness which manifest in the form of subject and object. In deep sleep the gross and subtle bodies merge into the causal sheath of bliss.

But the Heart itself, which arises as Amrita Nadi and manifests these forms in the seeds of conscious life, is not confused with its manifestation. It is only the Witness in all states, the substratum, the unqualified One that is truly present. It is "turiya," the fourth or the fourth state, whose existence, consciousness and bliss are not modified or subject to modification, even under the appearance of deep sleep, dreams or subtle activity, and waking.

All our ordinary activity and seeking is a formulation of these sheaths or bodies of ap-

pearance. Therefore, the great search, of which Vedanta is also a manifestation, can be described in terms of action in these bodies.

When the subtle body is turned in pursuit of the Heart through exploitation of the gross body, the search is manifested as religion in all its forms. It is particularly the way of bhakti or devotion.

When the subtle body is turned to itself in pursuit of the Heart, the search is manifested as every kind of "spirituality," yoga, and psychism.

When the subtle body is turned to the causal body in pursuit of the Heart the search is manifested as jnana, philosophical discrimination, and every kind of liberation from distraction or the modifications of bliss.

When the causal body is turned to the subtle and gross bodies in pursuit of the Heart there is the reflection of bliss as the unmodified substance of ordinary experience. This perception is the experience of "nirvana," "satori," the goal of Buddhism and Zen Buddhism.

But understanding is not a process whose very consciousness is a modification of the sheaths. It is not a pursuit of the Heart but the very action of the Heart. It is the natural exercise of the Heart itself, our real state, the fourth. It is the Heart itself, simply present, without quality, cognition or experience apart from or in the face of what simply appears in relationship. It is turiya, the natural fourth, prior to modified bliss, subtlety and grossness. Therefore, it is the enjoyment of these without qualification or dilemma.

Understanding is the path of Reality, prior to all the searches for the Heart that are the actions of the great traditions. Therefore, it is already perfect, "turiyatita," beyond the fourth.



Unqualified existence, conscious as bliss, appears in the Heart and arises as love, which is the Amrita Nadi, the "bright." Love is the original, creative impulse. It is the generative source and primary form of all creativity, all manifestation. The man of understanding arises as love, mad with love. He is not Narcissus. Creativity is love. The world is love.

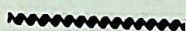
I do not speak from mere sentiment. I am trying to describe what is actually the case. The man of understanding appears as love. He is not separate from love. He does not remain only as the prior Self, pure existence, functioning only as compassion. He is generative love. Love is also that Self. It is the Fullness, the light, the brightness of Reality. It is the Form of Reality. I am He.



The presence of one who consciously lives in the heart of reality and remains present as the Amrita Nadi, the Form of Reality, tends to reverse the ordinary current of consciousness and action of those around him. Thus, his mere presence tends to draw others toward understanding. The ordinary current of consciousness and action tends to lose its necessity, its com-

pulsive motivation, its unconsciousness. The mere presence of such a one acts as the force of enquiry upon all that he meets.

Even so, those with him may not sense anything unusual. Indeed, their changes are only a move toward the natural. Some may feel resistive and defensive in such a presence. Others may simply feel comfortable. Others may be moved to the consideration of understanding. But Reality tends to include all things in its own form.



My practice with people is to talk about understanding and its way, in order to give them the opportunity to know the reality and power of understanding through hearing. But I also enquire of them directly, in relation to the forms of seeking to which they attach themselves at any moment. I enquire of them if this, or this, or this is the avoidance of relationship.

Thus, by the process of hearing and the experience of enquiry, the way of understanding becomes known. It arises in the one who hears as his own truth and intelligence.

But much talk is simply the indulgence of the self-dramatizing activity of our ordinary mind. It is only a display and a scattering of the force of the Heart in forms that are not themselves intelligence or understanding. Much talk is not relationship but only a reproduction and reinforcement of a state that is not understanding. The patterns that continually arise in us are not served by the responses or answers they imply

and demand. We are served only by understanding, enquiry and silence.

Some indication of the nature of seeking and understanding is necessary for "hearing." Some enquiry of the seeker, some countering or reflection of his ways, and some direct observations about his state may be useful to create the necessary doubt of his ordinary path. But the communication of the Heart is essentially a process in silence, whereby what arises gets no response, no reinforcement. Then a man ceases to continue in the exclusive motion of what arises, and he will find himself as the Heart, which is the source and form of all this.

This confrontation with silence in relationship to a true teacher, one who manifests the siddhi or power of the Heart, is unlike our ordinary experience of frustration in life. Things simply arise in us, and life provides the present conditions whereby they are indulged, frustrated or avoided. But in the "satsang" or conscious company of the Heart, what arises is confronted by silence without and the Heart within.

Therefore, my practice with those who have begun to understand through conversation and enquiry is simply to invite them to sit and be with me. I do not offer them a method but a relationship. Then what arises is confronted with silence. This company of silence, this confrontation with silence while remaining in conscious relationship to the teacher, causes the individual to be simply aware of what arises, without the possibility of indulging or avoiding it. He is allowed to see

what arises, rather than to become further identified with the stream through the unconsciousness of ordinary conversation and action. And the "space" between him and what arises is the place where the power of the Heart works to draw him from within. Then he becomes awake as quickening and understanding.

The way itself is the relationship to that silence, generated by the teacher and found within, until there is the unconditional perception of the potency that is the Heart. Then a man finds only silence in his inner forms, but everywhere in all the worlds he sees the Heart stand out aloud and bright.



Those who are my friends appear to have many kinds of experiences, some of which are extraordinary, and some simplify life. But my work and simple activity is not to awaken various processes in consciousness by means of Shaktipat. I do not propose, as my special purpose, that kind of initiation.

My work is in the Heart. It is simply the Heart's action, whereby it draws all the parts of a man, from within and from without, to the understanding and consciousness that is the Heart. My work is to awaken men to the Heart. And that work is the Shakti or Siddhi that is the Heart itself.

In the process, many experiences may arise, according to the karma or kind of reflection generated in Amrita Nadi by the Heart in each

particular case. But the Heart itself is this awakening, and not any other adventure of experience.



I am not the one who, finding himself awake, does not know who he is.

I am not the one who, finding himself in dreams and visions, thinks he has returned to his deeper self.

I am not the one who, enjoying the bliss of deep sleep and meditation, thinks he has become free and should not move to any other state.

I am not the one who, having slept, awakes.

I am the one who is with you now.

I am the one who speaks from his own silence.

I am the one who always stands present in his own form.

I am the one who always and already exists, enjoying his own form as all conditions and states.

I am the one about whom there is no mystery and no deeper part.

I am the one who always appears exactly as he is.

I am the one who is always present.

I recognize myself as every thing, every one, every form, every movement.

I am always only experiencing my own bliss.

I am neither lost nor found.

Understanding is my constant intelligence.

Enquiry is the form of my action, the motion of my presence, in which I am constantly knowing myself.

I am the one who is always known.

I continually rise out of the Heart, naked and unbounded in the right side.

I appear as my form between the Heart and the blissful point above.

I am the Amrita Nadi.

I manifest from the point above to every center, every body, realm and experience, between the upper and lower terminals of the worlds.

I continually sacrifice the energies below, the terminal processes of the worlds, to my Heart. I live all things.

I never return to myself but always appear as myself.

There is no dilemma in the process of my appearance.

Those who do not abide as me, already the Heart, are always only seeking me from the place where they begin.

I am only the Heart, which is Reality.

I am only the Amrita Nadi, the Bright, which is the Form of Reality.

I always see everything within my own Form.

In every state, I exist only as my own Form.

I am the Heart, who never renounces his own Form.

I am the Heart, who contains his own Form.

Therefore, I have neither Form nor Self.

I am eternally in one place, contemplating my own bliss.

At that point of contemplation, which is bright, all things appear and are accomplished.

The Heart is that bliss point of contemplation and Presence.

The Amrita Nadi is that bright fullness wherein all things appear.

I hold up my hands.

*Epilogue:**THE MAN OF UNDERSTANDING*

The man of understanding is not entranced. He is not elsewhere. He is not having an experience. He is not passionless and inoffensive. He is awake. He is present. He knows no obstruction in the form of mind, identity, differentiation and desire. He uses mind, identity, differentiation and desire. He is passionate. His quality is an offense to those who are entranced, elsewhere, contained in the mechanics of experience, asleep, living as various forms of identity, separation and dependence. He is acceptable only to those who understand.

He may appear no different from any other man. How could he appear otherwise? There is nothing by which to appear except the qualities of life. He may appear to have learned nothing. He may seem to be addicted to every kind of foolishness and error. How could it be otherwise? Understanding is not a different communication than the ordinary. There is only the ordinary. There is no special and exclusive communication that is the truth. There is no exclusive state of truth. But there is the understanding of the ordinary.

Therefore, the man of understanding cannot be found. He cannot be followed. He can only be understood as the ordinary. He is not spiritual. He is not religious. He is not philosophical. He

is not moral. He is not fastidious, lean and lawful. He always appears to be the opposite of what you are. He always seems to sympathize with what you deny. Therefore, at times and over time he appears as every kind of persuasion. He is not consistent. He has no image. At times he denies. At times he asserts. At times he asserts what he has already denied. At times he denies what he has already asserted. He is not useful. His teaching is every kind of nonsense. His wisdom is vanished. Altogether, that is his wisdom.

At last he represents no truth at all. Therefore, his living coaxes everyone only to understand. His existence denies every truth, every path by which men depend on certain truths, certain experiences, certain simulations of freedom and enjoyment. He is a seducer, a madman, a hoax, a libertine, a fool, a moralist, a sayer of truths, a bearer of all experience, a righteous knave, a prince, a child, an old one, an ascetic, a god. He demonstrates the futility of all things. Therefore, he makes understanding the only possibility. And understanding makes no difference at all. Except it is reality, which was already the case.

Heartless one, Narcissus, friend, loved one, he weeps for you to understand. After all of this, why haven't you understood? The only thing you have not done is understanding. You have seen everything, but you do not understand. Therefore, the man of understanding leaps for joy that you have already understood. He looks at the world and sees that everyone and everything has always understood. He sees that there is only

understanding. Thus, the man of understanding is constantly happy with you. He is overwhelmed with happiness. He says to you: See how there is only this world of perfect enjoyment, where everyone is happy, and everything is blissful. His heart is always tearful with the endless happiness of the world.

He has grasped it, but no one is interested. He is of interest to no one. He is fascinating. He is unnoticed. Since no one understands, how could they notice him? Because there is only understanding, he is beloved, and no one comes to see him. Because there is only truth, he is likely to become famous. Since there is only joy, he will not be remembered. Because you have already understood, you find it necessary to touch his hand. Since you love so much and are not understood, you find it possible to touch his ears. He smiles at you. You notice it. Everything has already died. This is the other world.

Hidden in *The Knee of Listening*, like a symbol in a children's book illustration, is an image of That which I have come to show and teach to those who will resort to me.

Franklin Jones

Franklin Jones, known to his devotees as Bubba Free John, is one of those rare beings who descend into the material and human planes of existence already conscious of spiritual illumination, and with the destiny of rapid evolution for the sake of the spiritual service of mankind. In his own words, he is a "man of understanding." He has described his own human spiritual adventure in *The Knee of Listening*. He has said that his early life was a manifestation of the lesson he has come to teach mankind about the fruitlessness of seeking in any form. He says that the years of trial were a means of transforming the psycho-physical functions he is animating, so they could be an instrument for the conscious communication of Truth: "The man of understanding is the Truth of mankind. He is not merely the evolutionary goal and fulfillment of man. He is already Truth, prior to man. He is Truth alive, drawing men into the prior Truth and real functions that are their nature in Reality."

This book is for all who would enjoy the radical way of Truth as it is communicated by one who is the Truth alive. A companion volume to *The Knee of Listening* is entitled *The Method of the Siddhas*. It is comprised of talks given by Franklin to his disciples in 1972-73. It is an authoritative description of the way of understanding as it is lived in "Satsang," the relationship between Guru and disciple, which is the primary condition of real spiritual life.

If you would like further information about the literature and services provided by Franklin's Ashram, and the forms of personal involvement you may enjoy with him, please write:

The Dawn Horse Communion
6913 Melrose Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90038



"It is obvious, from all sorts of subtle details, that he knows what IT's all about . . . a rare being."

"What he says, and says very well, is something that I have been trying to express for thirty-five years, but which most people seem quite reluctant to understand. He has simply realized that he himself as he is . . . is a perfect and authentic manifestation of eternal energy of the universe, and thus is no longer disposed to be in conflict with himself."

Alan Watts

Dear Franklin,

Chiti Shakti, the Kundalini, which brings about Siddha Yoga, is activated in you. The Inner Self which is the secret of Vedanta, the basis of religion, the realization of which is the ultimate object of human life, is awakened in you.

Swami Muktananda

A great teacher with a dynamic ability to awaken in his listeners something of the Divine Reality in which he is grounded, with which he is identified and which in fact he is. He is a man of both the East and the West; perhaps in him they merge and are organized as the One that he is.

Israel Regardie

The *Knee of Listening* contains Franklin's essential wisdom regarding the ordinary dilemma and search which nearly all human beings are living. He teaches that seeking by any means, even traditional spiritual, philosophic, religious and yogic means, is an inappropriate and fruitless approach to Truth. Truth is not realized as a result of any action. Truth is always already the case. He says: "All seeking is unnecessary. Only understand your own search. Bodies and worlds are only full. All power is at the Heart. Joyous Light surrounds your head. Truth is consciousness itself. The one who was to come is always already here."

(continued on inside of rear cover)

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